

— Ebrahim Raisi —

JAHANGIR'S

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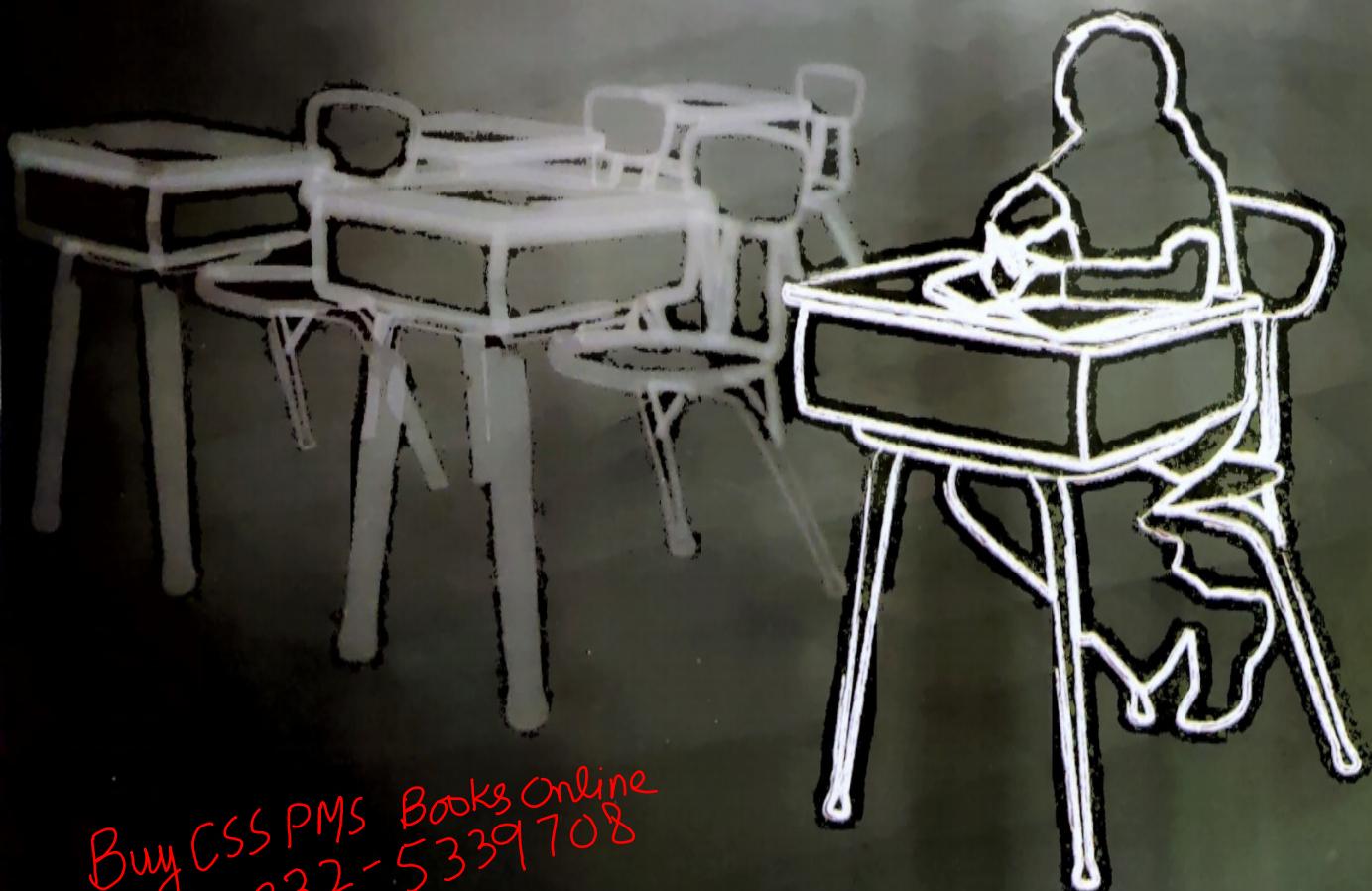
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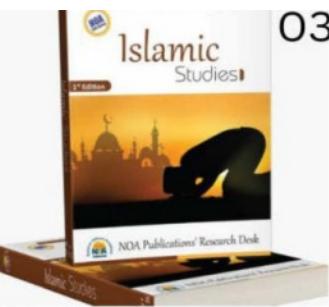
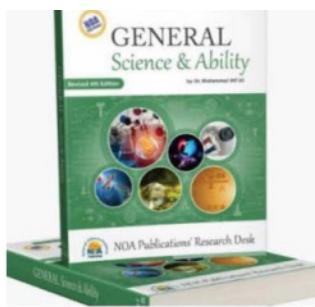
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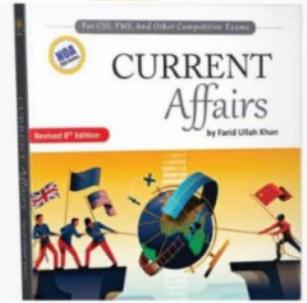
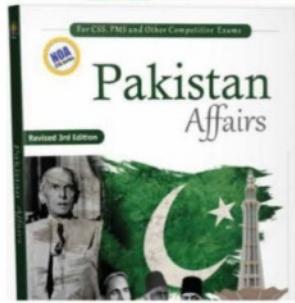
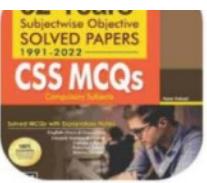
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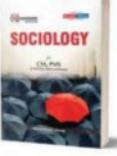
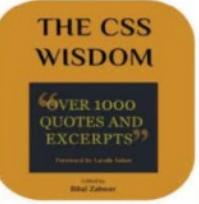
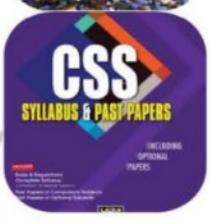
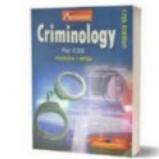
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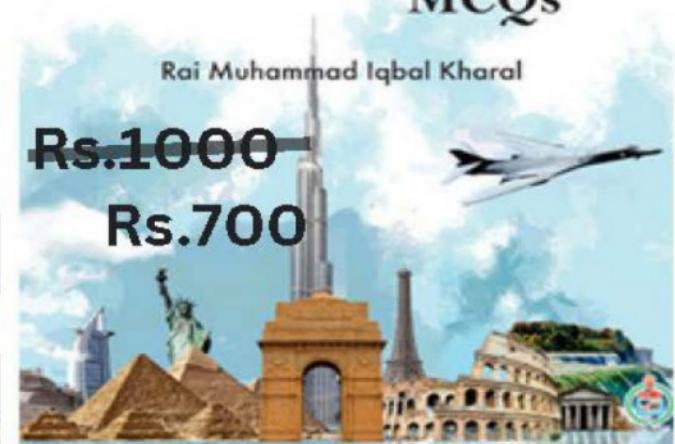
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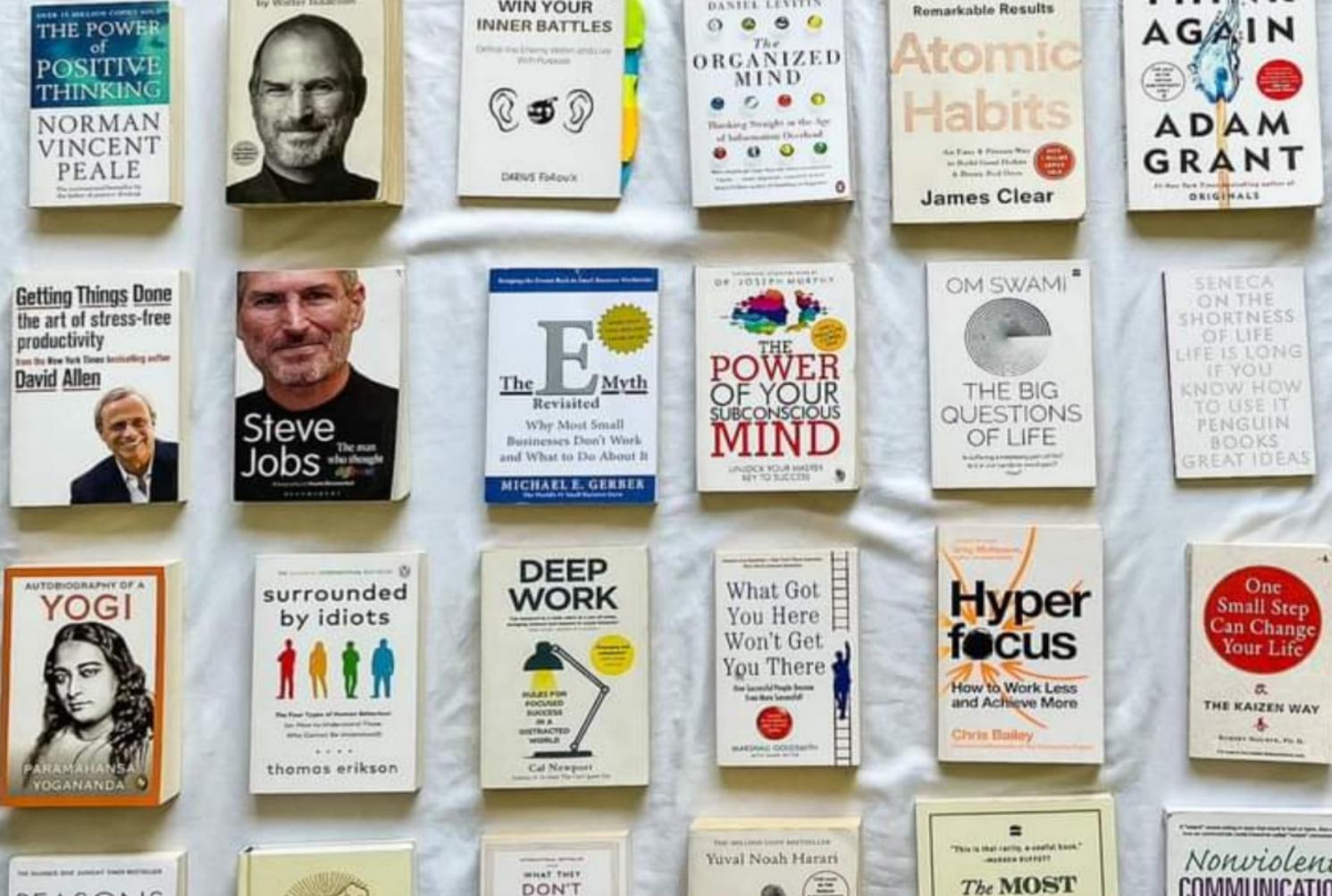


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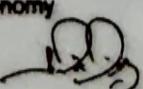
Encouraging Developments on the Economic Front

In recent weeks, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has been proactive on the diplomatic front, with an avowed mission to attract foreign investment in Pakistan. Foreign investment and trade relations are also improving and major economic powers around the world seem willing to make huge investments in Pakistan. Several countries, especially Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Turkiye, have shown interest in investing in Pakistan. Currently, sectors like agriculture, textiles, information technology, pharmaceuticals, mobiles, sports equipment, minerals, renewables, financial services and various other sectors offer huge scope to foreign investors. To expedite the process of bringing this foreign investment, which according to credible estimates is about 30 billion dollars, into Pakistan and reaping the maximum benefits of it, the government needs to formulate robust policies and implement them with full vigour.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is the most important source to boost our foreign exchange reserves. When foreign companies set up or invest in new projects in Pakistan, it not only helps in economic development but also earns precious foreign exchange. Moreover, it will also help us wean our economy of the dollars we have to borrow from international financial institutions, especially the International Monetary Fund (IMF). A strong economy will give us opportunities to adopt an independent foreign policy to earn Pakistan respectable status in the comity of nations. Economic independence will allow us to pursue our foreign policy objectives without being constrained by the conditions imposed by donor countries or international financial institutions. It will allow us to engage in trade negotiations, form economic alliances and offer aid or investments to other countries, thereby increasing our diplomatic clout and bargaining power. Since countries with strong economies are often leaders in technology and industry, by strengthening our economy, we will be able to foster technological advancement and innovation, which are critical for maintaining competitiveness in the global arena. Moreover, a strong economy will reduce our dependence on foreign aid and loans, which often come with strings attached.

So, given all these benefits, it is quite encouraging that the government is poised to bring foreign investments in Pakistan. However, to translate these promises into reality, there is a pressing need to create an enabling environment and formulate business-friendly policies. It is admirable that foreign investors are being attracted to Pakistan, but, at the same time, it is the responsibility of the government to provide opportunities for local investors as well. The promotion of local investment will automatically attract international investors.

There are no two opinions that knocking at the door of the IMF is not a choice but a compulsion for Pakistan, but if we want to break this barrier of aid and debt, we have to get into the habit of self-reliance and take practical steps for it. So, the government should patronize and encourage its people, simplify laws, remove all barriers to doing business. If foreign investors can be provided with one-window facilities, the same should be provided to local investors as well. If we want to drive our national economy in the right direction and towards prosperity, we need to work with sincerity.



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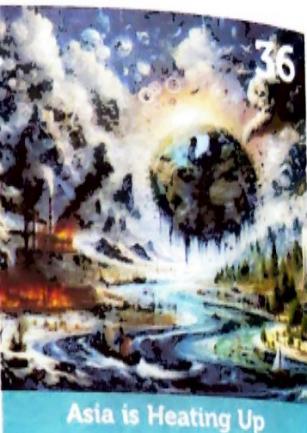


Ebrahim Raisi

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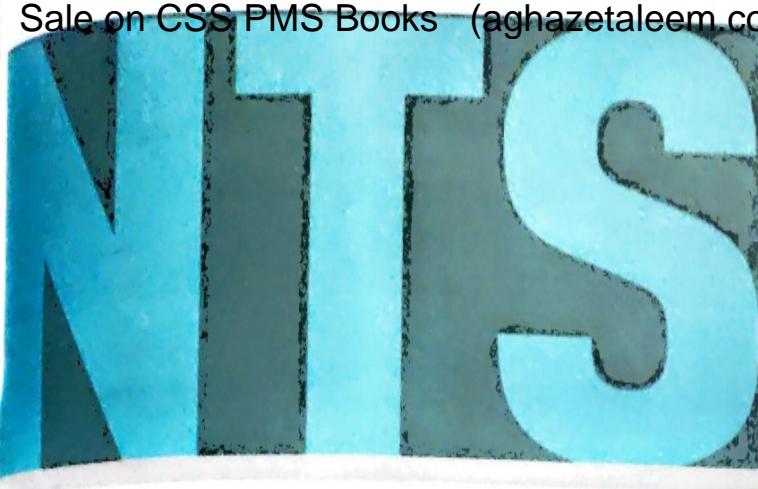
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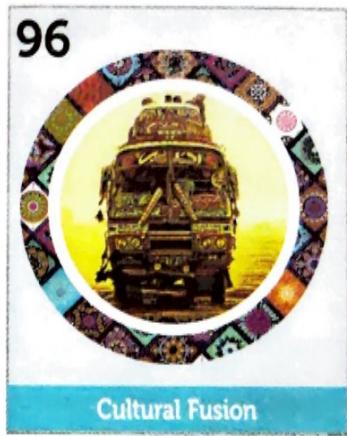
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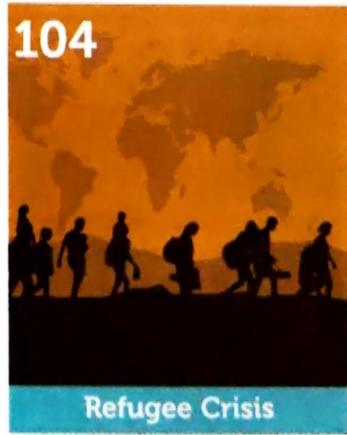
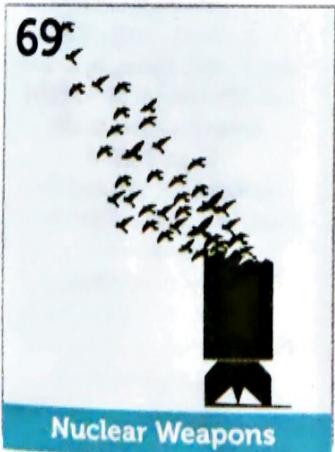
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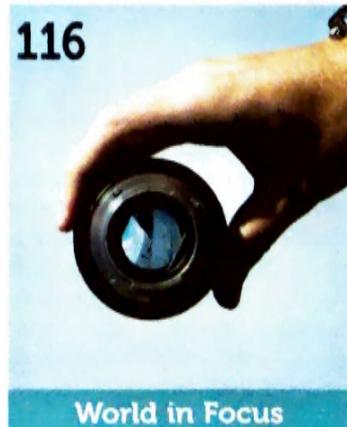
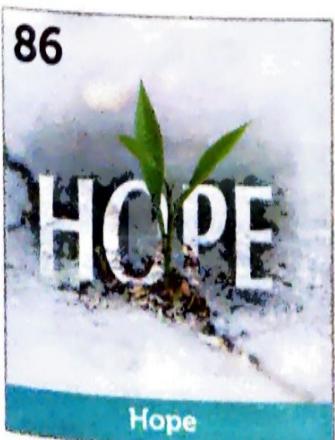
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LETTER to the EDITOR

A New World Order

Over the past twenty years, many analysts have been saying again and again that the world order is changing and new centers of power are emerging in many parts of the world. They have warned about the collapse of the hegemony of the Western world and that of the global hierarchy, which have led to the transfer of initiative in the development of the world to the countries of the Greater South, to non-Western countries, primarily Eurasian ones, e.g. India, China, Russia, and also some Latin American and African countries. We can talk for a long time about the reasons for the West's loss of its leading role. Undoubtedly, globalization, the development of information and communication technologies and the confrontation between the USSR and the USA played a role, under the shadow of which many countries of the so-called "Third World" were able to gain more independence, together with a natural change of generations, the spread of humanistic values and, probably, a huge number of other factors. However, this change in the world order is also fraught with some risks. In this regard, it is necessary that the leading countries in the world be able to develop a model of the future that is acceptable to everyone. This will allow them to come to an agreement and put aside the hysterics.

Mukhtar Qureshi, Rajanpur

Increasing Divorce Rates

As the Pakistani nation continues to embrace modernization and societal transformation, an ominous spike in divorce rates is being observed, which is threatening our social fabric and family system. People see multiple reasons behind this phenomenon, like financial instability, illiteracy, intolerance, domestic violence, misperception, changing socio-economic dynamics, women's financial independence, social media, interference of families, and last but not least, the weakening connection with religion. Most of our youth are ignorant of the philosophy of marriage because they are not properly taught. The fact is that when Allah Almighty created Eve, Adam questioned who she was, and Allah replied, "She is your 'contentment' and you also give her 'love and peace'." But, we have long forgotten this philosophy that holds both groom and bride responsible for a peaceful family. Nothing was impossible for the Almighty, but the choice He made for Adam was a partner, which explains the importance of this relationship. He made it a binding between two people and two families and termed divorcing the most unpleasant act. But changing norms and values and the western onslaught on our civilization have put this noble relationship at risk. They carry out their agenda sometimes in the name of women's empowerment, sometimes the rights and duties of a couple and sometimes independence. Their agenda focuses on flaring controversies, instead of promoting tolerance and understanding among married couples.

Asthma Haider, Swat

Raisi's Death

On May 19, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi died in a helicopter crash in a mountainous area within the administrative limits of Tabriz. While concrete evidence remains lacking, speculations of sabotage have arisen amid heightened tensions between Israel and Iran. The recent missile and drone attack that Iran launched against Israel on April 13 saw no significant retaliation. Israel had not responded in kind due, in part, to US pressure. If Israeli saboteurs were behind this crash, it would be very easy to deny for Tel Aviv. However, the involvement of domestic political factions also cannot be ruled out. If the crash and Raisi's death are deemed a mere accident, this could minimize the impact on the region. As per the constitutional requirements, the next election is to be held on 28 June. So, it is likely that Iran's known domestic and foreign policies will continue, largely dictated by the supreme leader Khamenei. Even if sabotage is involved, it is likely to remain undisclosed and may not have much impact on regional developments. However, a more aggressive course of action against Israel may be followed.

Shahzeb Khan, Loralai

Heal the Wounds of AJK

In recent weeks, AJK has witnessed a wave of violent protests over a demand for a reduction in prices, especially for electricity and wheat. Despite the unrest, the government's response, including the approval of Rs23 billion in subsidies, has been pivotal in de-escalating the situation. During his recent visit to the valley PM Shehbaz Sharif emphasized the need for a permanent solution to the challenges faced by AJK's residents. He ordered the formation of a committee to address critical issues such as water charges and the Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Plant. He stressed the importance of mutual understanding and collaboration between the federal and AJK governments, saying that it is imperative that we abandon the approach of resolving immediate concerns, and instead adopt preventative measures to prevent such protests from recurring in the future. Although the formation of committees to resolve the outstanding issues is a welcome step, an inquiry into the violence and a commitment to transparency are essential to heal the wounds and restore trust between the government and the people of AJK.

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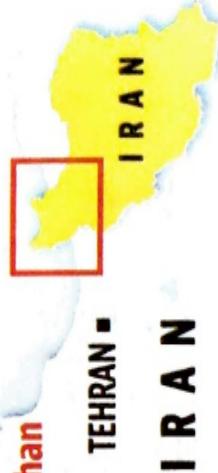
What we know about the crash

Iran on Monday announced the death of president Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash. A look at what we know about the crash so far

How it transpired

SUNDAY AFTERNOON: Iranian authorities raise the alarm as they lose contact with Raisi's helicopter – a Bell 212 – as it flies through a fog-shrouded mountain area of the Jolfa region of East Azerbaijan province. Raisi and other officials were returning from meeting with Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev on their common border to inaugurate a dam project.

• Dizmar
• Jolfa
• Varzaghan



THE HELICOPTER BELL 212

A Bell 212 is a civilian version of the ubiquitous Vietnam War-era UH-1N "Twin Huey". They are in wide use globally and deploys two turboshaft engines, which gives it greater carrying capacity than the standard "Huey" model. It was introduced in 1971. The Iranian model that crashed was configured to carry govt passengers and was flying in intense foggy conditions over high mountains.

MAINTENANCE ISSUE: Before Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1978, Iran had close ties with the US, which is when it purchased aircraft like Bell 212, among others. However, the sacking of ties and the sanctions that followed, meant that Iran has struggled to keep them running. Since then, Iran has resorted to cannibalising its fleet of US-made aircraft to keep others operational. The last time Iran obtained spare parts for the Bell 212 was in 1986, when they were a part of negotiations with US for release of hostages held in Lebanon.

SUNDAY EVENING: Interior minister Ahmad Vahidi first mentions a "hard landing". Hours later, only two of the three helicopters in his convoy landed in Tabriz, setting off a massive search and rescue effort.

MONDAY MORNING: As sun rises, rescue crews locate the destroyed aircraft. They say that none of the 9 people on board survived.

Who else was killed?

Alongside Raisi, Iranian foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and seven others, including the pilot, bodyguards and political and religious officials, died when the helicopter crashed.

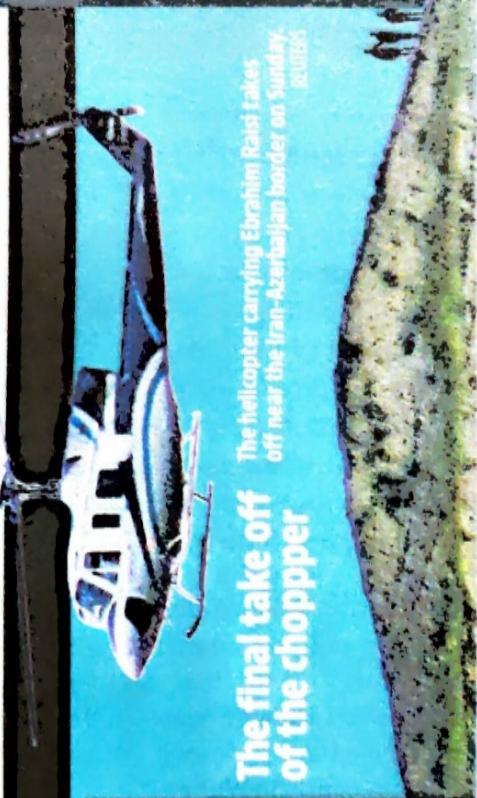
The life of Ebrahim Raisi

On December 14, 1960, Raisi was born into a family that traces its lineage to Prophet Muhammad. He joined the seminary in the Shia holy city of Qom and later described himself as an ayatollah.

HEAD OF DEATH PANELS: In 1980, at the end of Iran's long war with Iraq, Raisi served on what would become known as 'death commissions,' which handed down death sentences for political prisoners and others. Around 5,000 people were executed, earning him the label "The Butcher of Tehran."

Iran's Supreme Leader Khamenei appointed Raisi to run the Imam Reza charity foundation, which manages a conglomerate of businesses and endowments in Iran. Khamenei called him a "trustworthy person with high-profile experience." This led to widespread speculation that Khamenei was grooming Raisi to be Iran's third president, especially after his nearly 16 million votes. Khamenei installed him as the head of Iran's internationally criticized judiciary.

In 2020 elections: Khamenei disqualified candidates who posed the greatest challenge to his protege, and Raisi swept nearly 95% of the 26.9 million votes in that election.



The helicopter carrying Ebrahim Raisi takes off near the Iran-Azerbaijan border on Sunday, October 1.



Hangor-class Submarine

In a significant development for the Pakistan Navy, the country's naval warfare branch held, on April 26, a launching ceremony of the first Hangor-class submarine that China has developed for Pakistan, at Shuangliu Base in China's Wuhan. The Hangor-class submarines, which are equipped with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors, will not only play a pivotal role in maintaining peace and stability in the region but will also add a new dimension to Pakistan-China friendship.

In what is being described as a sign of strengthening military cooperation between the two countries, China has launched the first of eight advanced Hangor-class submarines being developed for Pakistan. A launch ceremony for the vessel was held recently in Wuhan.

Background

In 2015, during a visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping to Pakistan, the Pakistan government and China Shipbuilding & Offshore International Company Ltd signed the contract for the submarines. Under the contract, four submarines are to be built in China while the other four in Pakistan.

Basic characteristics

The Hangor-class, an export variant of the Chinese Type 039A Yuan class, is a diesel-electric attack submarine.

- "Diesel-electric" refers to the mode of propulsion — diesel engines power the submarine when surfaced or snorkelling, while a battery, charged by the diesel engine, allows the vessel to operate while submerged.

It is named after the now-decommissioned PNS Hangor, which famously sank Indian frigate INS Khukri during the 1971 war.

Zohair Ahmad

The Hangor-class boasts four diesel engines. It is also equipped with an air independent propulsion system, which significantly increases the submarines' endurance underwater.

It has six 21-inch torpedo tubes, and capabilities to launch anti-ship missiles, as well as the Babur-3 subsonic cruise missile, with a range of 450 km. In terms of size, the Hangor class has a displacement of 2,800 tons, is 76 m in length, 8.4 m in width (at its widest point), and has a draught (depth of the vessel below the waterline) of 6.2 m when on the surface.

Other submarines of Pak Navy

Currently, PN operates three Agosta 90B air-independent propulsion submarines and two Agosta 70 diesel-electric submarines. Three Agosta 90B subs have been undergoing a mid-life upgrade under a contract signed in 2016 with the Turkish STM Company as the prime contractor. STM delivered the first upgraded submarine, PNS Hamza, in 2020.

Conclusion

The eight Hangor Class submarines will significantly strengthen the Pakistan Navy. Pakistan is likely to improve its A2/AD capabilities in the region after the project is completed. ■

The writer is a member of staff.

PNS Hangor

On 9 December 1971, Pakistan Navy submarine Hangor, while patrolling in its allocated area off the Indian Khatiawar coast, located, tracked and fired a homing torpedo at the Indian anti-submarine frigate Khukri. The ship sank in two minutes along with its crew of 18 officers and 176 sailors. The submarine returned back to Karachi unharmed on 18 December. This was a turning point in the war at sea because after the attack "Operation Triumph" the third missile attack which was to be launched on 10 December was cancelled and thereafter no further missile or other attacks could be carried out by the Indian Navy.

INTERNATIONAL

The Coming US-China Cold War

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When it comes to competition between the United States and China, there is a growing realization that the two foremost superpowers of today's world are destined for a Cold War-like rivalry. Some recent policy steps by the Biden administration, which have made China irate, further add credence to this concern. The new \$95bn foreign aid package for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, which also includes the banning of Chinese-owned, video-streaming app TikTok – unless it is sold within a year – has made it clear that the US strategy for all-round competition with China, centered on strategic competition and based on long-term competition, has formally taken shape. The US is now stepping up its efforts to suppress China on various fronts such as politics and diplomacy, economy, trade, technology, and military security, showing the true meaning of a cold war.

The gulf remains deep, wide and long-lasting



Muhammad Sheeraz

The United States and China have one of the world's most important and complex bilateral relationships. But, the popular video-sharing app TikTok now risks becoming a high-profile casualty of the Cold-War sequel developing between the two countries. It's one of the world's biggest social media platforms, wildly popular with younger people. And, within a year, it could be banned in the United States. At issue is a provision tacked into a sprawling piece of legislation that officially became law when President Joe Biden signed it on April 24 – which forbids American companies from distributing, maintaining or updating apps controlled by foreign adversaries, defined as North Korea, China, Russia and Iran, in an existing law.

The law requires TikTok's Chinese owner ByteDance to sell the social media app's US operations or face a ban. It gives 270 days to sell the app's US operations and if ByteDance appears close to completing a deal as the deadline looms, the president can authorize a 90-day extension. This measure is part of a broader \$95bn package of foreign aid for Ukraine, Israel and US allies in the Indo-Pacific. The law will see \$8.12bn go to the Asia Pacific, including Taiwan, for which it includes arms support. It is to be noted here that the United States is Taiwan's most important international backer and arms supplier, even in the absence of formal diplomatic ties.

These two China-related steps have infuriated Beijing, as it has vehemently condemned its arms support for Taiwan. In response to this piece of legislation, the Chinese foreign ministry said that the strengthening of "military collusion" between the United States and Taiwan would not bring security for the island; rather, it would only push up "tensions and the risk of conflict and confrontation in the Taiwan Strait."

"It is extremely hypocritical and irresponsible for the US to introduce a large-scale aid bill for Ukraine while making groundless accusations against normal economic and trade exchanges between China and Russia," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokes-

person Wang Wenbin said.

In light of the recent spate of events, it is vividly clear that the Biden administration has palmed the baton offered by its predecessor, the Donald Trump administration, under whose stewardship the United States launched its all-round strategic competition with China in December 2017, with the release of its National Security Strategy.

President Biden has been upgrading and rationalizing the US's competitive strategies against China since taking office in 2021. In October 2022, the Biden administration unveiled its first formal National Security Strategy, saying that "the People's Republic of China is the only competitor with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military and technological power to do it ... In the competition with the PRC, as in other arenas, it is clear that the next 10 years will be the decisive decade".

It is also clear that the US strategy for all-round competition with China has formally taken shape. In a nutshell, it is a four-pronged approach.

Decoupling/De-risking

1. To start with, the US is attempting to gradually and selectively 'decouple' from China in economic and trade areas.

The trade war initiated by the Trump administration was the start of the US's all-round strategic competition with China, with the Biden administration developing that into the concept of "decoupling". A sudden decoupling from China will be too much to bear for the US and its allies, which has been made clear by what has happened since the US launched its trade war against China and during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the US thinks that it has to decouple from China to contain its rise. Thus, after taking office, US President Biden replaced decoupling with "de-risking", which is nothing but a euphemism for selective, gradual decoupling.

2. Building alliances

In geopolitics, the US is repeating what it did to the Soviet Union during the Cold War period. Despite claims from President Biden and officials from his administration that the US will not fight a Cold War with China, many US moves resemble what it did against the Soviet Union during the Cold War. For instance, the US is strengthening its bilateral alliance system, enhancing the role of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue that groups the US with Japan, India and Australia, elevating the role of the AUKUS trilateral security partnership of the US, the United Kingdom and Australia, and promoting NATO's eastward expansion. All these US moves are aimed at suppressing China by magnifying the role of its system of allies and partners.

The US is also strengthening its presence and deployment along the "first island chain," particularly around the East China Sea, the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. It aims to create a center-stage battlefield for strategic competition with China, particularly by means of the Taiwan question. This is the ultimate reason for the US to inject more and more strategic resources into the Taiwan area in recent years.

3. Strengthening domestically

The Biden administration is reactivating the US-style 'militarist system', which has its roots back to World War II, domestically. In the wake of WWII, the US passed the National Security Act of 1947 to mandate a major reorganization of the national security system, due to it becoming the world's top superpower and its Cold War struggle with the Soviet Union. The act created many institutions including the Department of Defense, the National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency. The common anti-communism stance of the Republican and Democratic parties strengthened government-Congress and government-society coordination, thus forming a national security interest chain and creating the

A look at the Law

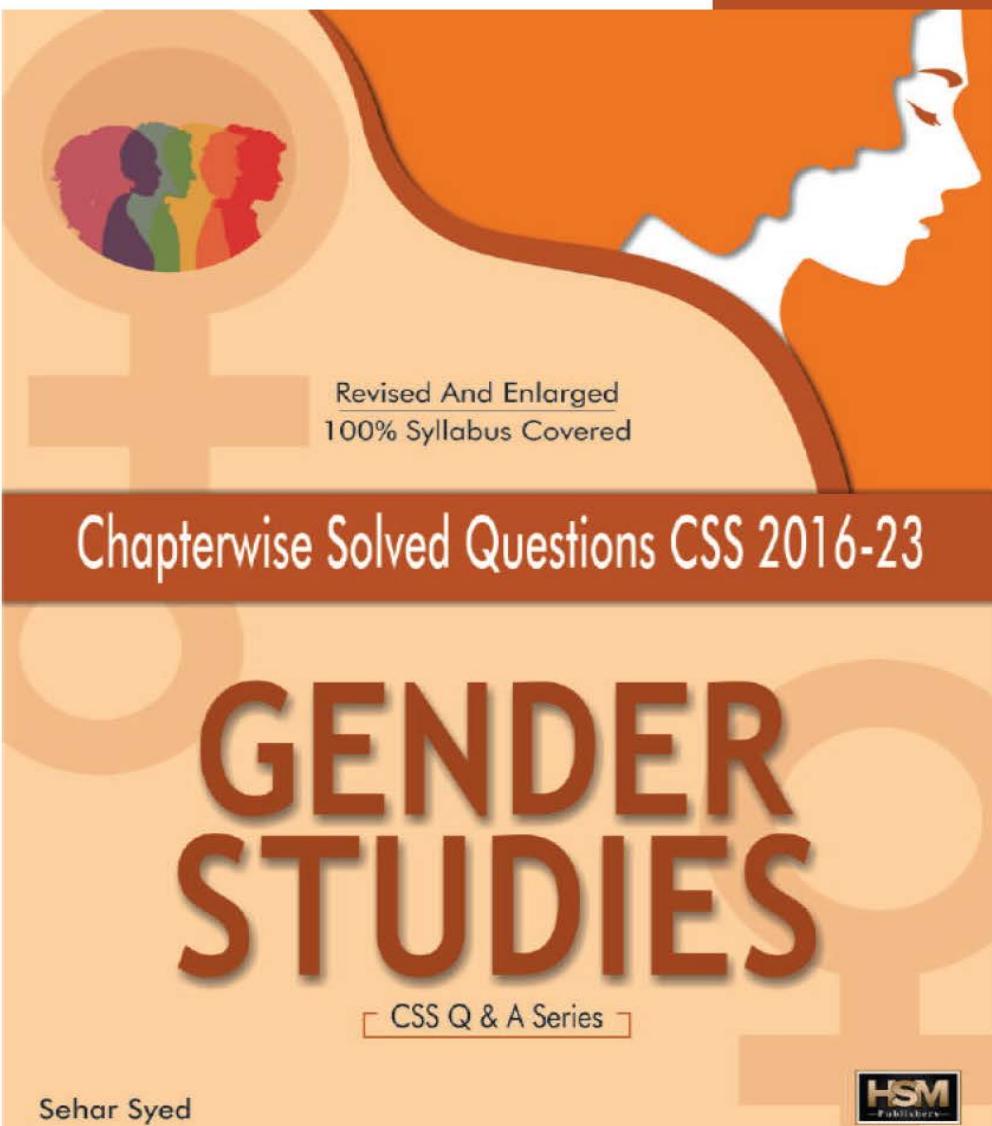
The \$95bn in total funding includes roughly \$61bn for Ukraine with some of the funding going towards replenishing American munitions; \$26bn for Israel; \$8bn for US allies in the Indo-Pacific region, including Taiwan; and \$9bn in humanitarian assistance for civilians in war zones, such as Haiti, Sudan and Gaza, though the package also includes a ban until March 2025 on direct US funding for the UN Relief and Works Agency (Unrwa), an agency providing key assistance to Gaza.

In the Ukraine bill, of the \$60.7bn, a total of about \$23bn would be used by the US to replenish its military stockpiles, opening the door to future US military transfers to Ukraine. Another \$14bn would go to the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, in which the Pentagon buys advanced new weapon systems for the Ukrainian military directly from US defence contractors.

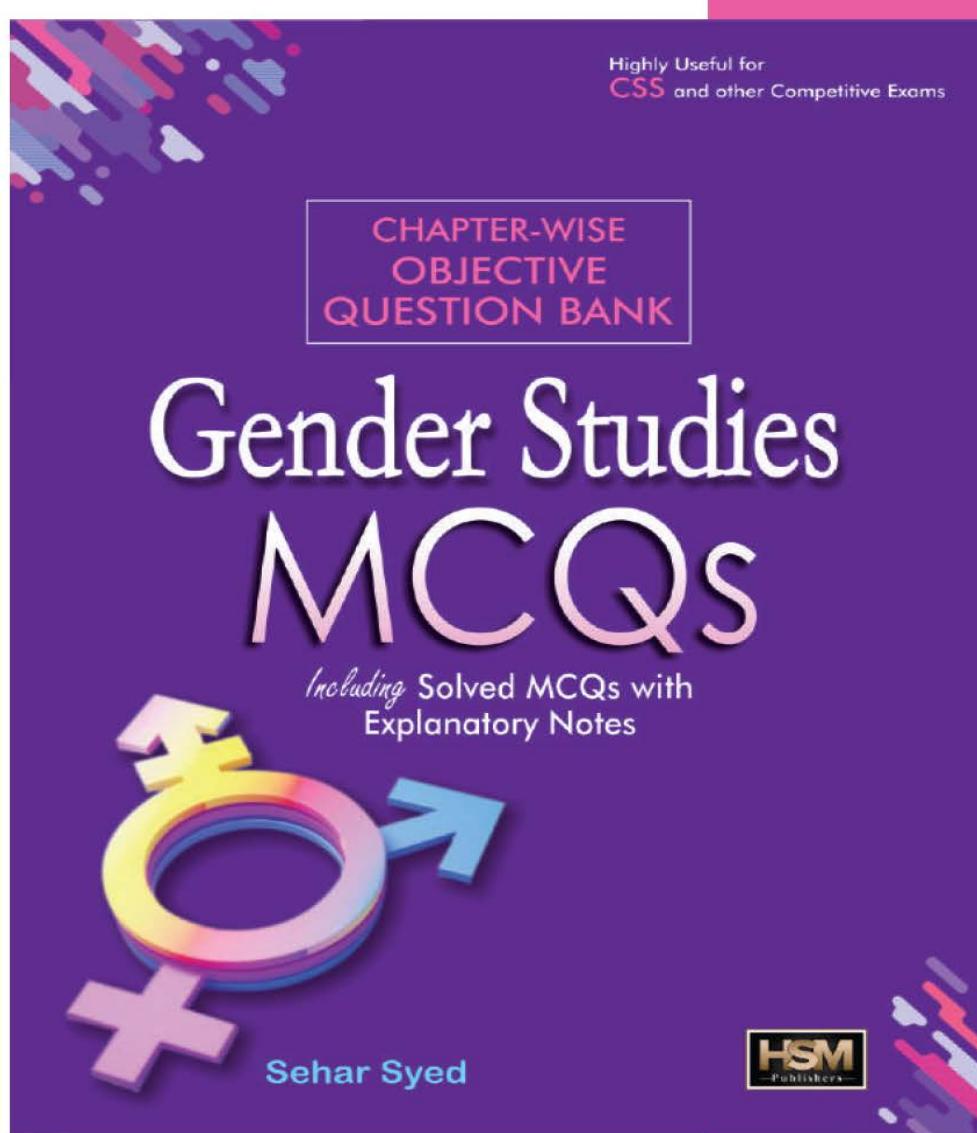
There is also more than \$11bn to fund current US military operations in the region, enhancing the capabilities of the Ukrainian military and fostering intelligence collaboration between Kyiv and Washington; and about \$8bn in non-military assistance, such as helping Ukraine's government continue basic operations, including the payment of salaries and pensions.

The package includes several Republican priorities that Democrats endorsed, or at least were willing to accept. Those include proposals that allow the US to seize frozen Russian central bank assets to rebuild Ukraine; impose sanctions on Iran, Russia, China and criminal organisations that traffic fentanyl; and legislation to require the China-based owner of the popular video app TikTok to sell its stake within a year or face a ban in the US.

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military-industrial complex.

This militarist system played a crucial role in the US-Soviet Union Cold War, but faded away in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The system was partly reactivated after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in 2001, most importantly by passing the US Patriot Act. After the outbreak of the financial crisis, some US strategists proposed the so-called "whole-of-government" approach, by referring to experiences in mobilizing

the politics of national identity, magnifying the impacts of differences in political systems and selling the idea that the West can never get along with China. By doing so, the US aims to mobilize all resources to form an anti-China consensus domestically and to draw more countries into an anti-China camp globally.

Dousing the fire?

Just hours after President Biden signed that law, Secretary of State Antony Blinken reached China - his second visit to China in less than a year - to manage the differences between the two countries responsibly. In his meeting with the Chinese foreign minister, Wang Yi, Blinken raised concerns about China's trade policies and non-market economic practices and expressed hope for a level playing field for US workers and firms operating in China.

China's foreign minister Wang Yi warned Blinken that US pressure could trigger a "downward spiral," as the visiting diplomat raised concerns on issues including support for Russia. Wang also warned that the question of self-ruled Taiwan was the "first red line" that must not be crossed in China-US relations.

According to Yang Tao, Director General of the Department of North American and Oceanian Affairs of the Foreign Ministry, the two sides, having extensively exchanged views, reached consensus in the following five aspects:

1. The two sides agreed to continue their efforts to stabilize and develop China-US relations. They recognized the progress made in the dialogue and cooperation in various fields since the San Francisco meeting, and agreed to move faster to implement the important common understandings reached by the two presidents in San Francisco.

US-CHINA

Battlefronts

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Main areas of dispute between the US and China



TRADE WAR

US and China have imposed tariffs on most of their goods trade.



HUAWEI

US has accused China of using the 5G telecoms leader to spy. Huawei has repeatedly denied allowing Beijing access to data on its networks.



CORONAVIRUS

US blames China for spreading the virus. Beijing denies this.



HONG KONG

Beijing's move to impose a security law on the territory has led to retaliatory sanctions by the US



UIGHURS

US has imposed sanctions on some Chinese individuals accused of human rights abuses against Muslim minorities, including the Uighurs.



SOUTH CHINA SEA

China accused US in July of "inciting confrontation" after Washington rejected Beijing's territorial claims in the region.



CONSULATE CLOSURES

Last month, China ordered the US to shut its consulate in the city of Chengdu, a day after Washington ordered Beijing to terminate its consular mission in Houston, accusing it of espionage.



TIKTOK

Trump has ordered Chinese owner of video-sharing platform to close down US operations or sell them to a US firm by September 15.

government and social resources during Cold War with the Soviet Union and summarizing US experiences in its war on terrorism. This approach aims to mobilize all resources and unify all forces to compete with China on all fronts.

4. Promoting US style of diplomacy

The US is going all out to promote the so-called ideology-based and values-based diplomacy. In ideology-related topics, the US has been emphasizing

having extensively exchanged views, reached consensus in the following five aspects:

1. The two sides agreed to continue their efforts to stabilize and develop China-US relations. They recognized the progress made in the dialogue and cooperation in various fields since the San Francisco meeting, and agreed to move faster to implement the important common understandings reached by the two presidents in San Francisco.

2. The two sides agreed to maintain high-level interaction and engagements on various levels. They agreed to leverage the role of consultation mechanisms in such areas as diplomacy, economy, finance, and commerce that are restored or newly established. They resolved to continue the military-to-military interaction, and advance cooperation on counter-narcotics, climate change and artificial intelligence.

3. The two sides announced that the first meeting of the inter-governmental dialogue on artificial intelligence will be held. Consultations on the guiding principles of China-US relations will be advanced. A new round of consultations on Asia-Pacific affairs and maritime affairs will be held.

4. The two sides will take steps to expand people-to-people exchanges, and welcome students from each other's countries.

5. The two sides will maintain consultations on international and regional hotspot issues and strengthen communications between the special envoys of the two countries.

Implications for Pakistan

Pakistan is worried about how the worsening US-China rivalry will impact its relations with both countries. Of the various urgent and important foreign policy challenges, the most significant and consequential challenge the newly installed government will face will be maintaining Pakistan's strategic autonomy, and balancing relations with the two global powers amid their escalating rivalry. In his inaugural speech in parliament, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif pledged that the country will not be part of any great game, implying that Pakistan will not align exclusively with either the US or China in their ongoing friction. Nonetheless, it is easier said than done, as the manoeuvring space for balancing relations with both global powers is fast shrinking.

The signs of troubled times were visible for quite some time, especially with consistently growing US criticism of Chinese investment projects in Pakistan under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project of China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

It is important for Pakistan to understand that the world is heading towards a new Cold War. After the last Cold War, in peacetime, countries like

Pakistan used to shape their foreign policies according to their national interests. However, in the emerging situation, it will be very difficult for Pakistan to formulate an independent foreign policy. At the moment, Pakistan is not in a position to offend the United States. A glimpse of American influence on Pakistan can be seen in the recent visit of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to Pakistan. During the visit, the US White House spokesman covertly suggested that relations with Iran should be avoided.

It seems especially important because Pakistan has submitted a fresh request to the IMF, which is under strong influence of the United States, for a loan of \$8 billion. However, it is feared that if Pakistan expands relations with Iran, which is currently under many international sanctions, it may face sanctions, the burden of which our weak economy will not be able to bear. It is a fact that Iran has completed its part of the pipeline in the Iran-Pakistan gas line project, but we are unable to complete the remaining part of the work. Because of this, we can be restricted.

At present, on the one hand, we are struggling to control our economic crisis, on the other hand, we are fighting to strengthen democracy, but we must also realize that the growing contradictions within the world can create new challenges for us at any time.

Conclusion

In recent years, China-US relations have suffered great difficulties. The root cause is that some people in the US cling to the Cold-War and zero-sum game mentality, and are obsessed with viewing China as the US' foremost competitor and most consequential geopolitical challenge. This seriously-distorted perception of China will inevitably lead to wrong policies, wrong actions and wrong results. □

The writer is a member of staff.





From Columbia University to Harvard and Yale, a wave of protests supporting Palestine is sweeping across American campuses. Pro-Palestinian protests have drawn students and faculty of various backgrounds, including those of Jewish and Muslim faiths. The encampments have also

Student protests in the United States over the war in Gaza have intensified and expanded during the past few weeks, with a number of encampments now in place at colleges including Columbia, Yale, and New York University. Pro-Palestinian demonstrations, which have also spread to schools in Europe and Australia, are calling for a ceasefire in Israel's war on Gaza, which has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians. Amidst growing calls to divest from Israel, some universities have cancelled their graduation ceremonies, while others have seen entire buildings occupied by protesting students. Several US colleges have used law enforcement – along with academic suspensions and, for at least one school, expulsion – to bring to heel student demonstrations, but all in vain.

STUDENT PROTESTS IN THE UNITED STATES

**Humanitarian disaster facilitated
by US deepens divisions within
the American society**

attracted a diverse array of teach-ins, interfaith prayers and musical performances. In what is perhaps the most significant student movement since the anti-Vietnam campus protests of the late 1960s, protesters are demanding a permanent ceasefire in Gaza, an end to US military assistance for Israel and university divestment from arms suppliers and other companies profiting from the war. The demonstrations appear to be growing in the face of intense crackdowns involving local law enforcement as well as growing political scrutiny. Behind these protests is the dissatisfaction of young Americans with the US' Middle East policy, which enables regional conflicts. For instance, President Biden is still sending billions of dollars to back Israel's onslaught. The \$26 billion in new aid to Israel, passed overwhelmingly in Congress and signed into law by Biden on April 24, also comes amid a deepening humanitarian crisis in Gaza and a looming Israeli invasion of the southern city of Rafah, where more than a million Palestinian civilians are sheltering. The \$26 billion package is almost entirely earmarked for defensive and offensive weapons for Israel, with some funds for US forces in the Middle East.

And, support for Israel has, not surprisingly, bipartisan support in the United States. While Democrats have expressed growing concerns about how Israel is carrying out its war in Gaza, they have largely rallied around sending more weapons to Israel. The aid package highlights a huge gap between American politicians and the masses.

While Biden has pushed for a hostage release and a temporary cease-fire deal and has expressed frustration with the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, he has continued to unconditionally send more weapons to Israel, which is

committed to fighting until Hamas is decimated. But, this policy of unconditionally supporting Israel is backfiring, further dividing an already fractured American society and presenting political challenges for the Biden administration during the election season. The picture is actually quite clear: what Biden is doing is increasing his rhetorical criticism of Israel and when it comes to practical policy, all of the movement is towards continuing to support what Biden himself criticizes.

The Biden administration's response to the war has had three main objectives.

First, it has sought to convey steadfast support for Israel: backing it rhetorically, conferring regularly with top Israeli officials, defending it against accusations of genocide, vetoing cease-fire resolutions in the United Nations Security Council, and providing it with a steady supply of lethal armaments.

Second, Washington has tried to prevent the conflict in Gaza from escalating.

Lastly, it has tried to convince Israel to act with restraint, both to limit harm to Palestinian civilians and to minimize the damage to the United States' image and reputation.

But, this policy has failed because its aims are inherently contradictory. Giving Israel unconditional support gave its leaders little incentive to heed US calls for restraint, so it is hardly surprising that they have ignored them. Gaza has been destroyed, at least 34,000 Palestinians (including more than 12,000 children) are now dead, and US officials now admit that civilians there are facing conditions of famine.

Let's not forget that the United States has been "flooding" the Middle East with weaponry for decades. It provides Israel with billions of dollars of sophisticated military equipment every year, along with repeated assurances that US support is unconditional.

That support hasn't wavered as Israel has bombed and starved the civilian population in Gaza, and it wasn't affected when Israel greeted US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's recent visit by announcing the largest confiscation of Palestinian land in the West Bank since 1993. Washington didn't blink when Israel

bombed Iran's consulate in Damascus, even as it was condemning Ecuador's recent assault on the Mexican Embassy in Quito. Instead, top Pentagon officials headed for Jerusalem in a show of support, and Biden made a point of emphasizing that his commitment to Israel remains "ironclad." Is it any wonder, then, that Israeli officials believe they can ignore advice from the United States?

So, the recent student protests reflect a widespread sense of sorrow among students and teachers about the humanitarian disaster caused by the US's biased Middle East policy toward Israel, and a strong aversion to the profit-driven and loss of basic human judgment in US foreign policy. The students and teachers' demand is simple: the US government should stop providing money, weapons and ammunition to Israel, so as to stop exacerbating this humanitarian crisis.

Since the Israel-Palestine conflict began, the number of casualties has been constantly increasing every day. It is essential to de-escalate the situation as soon as possible and stop innocent civilians from becoming victims. This is a basic human right. The protests in American universities should serve as a wake-up call regarding US's Middle East policy, which is becoming increasingly unpopular. The US's continued bias toward Israel will only lead to more dissatisfaction among the public.

The crackdown by US police on campuses clearly reflects that the US government's policy is against the American public. It also reflects the double standards and hypocrisy of the US on issues of free speech and human rights. "American university faculty and students are a group within American society that possesses a spirit of reflection. Their protests not only reflect how disappointed the American public is with the government but also strongly express their expectations for US policy to take the right direction. However, the country's healthy and rational voices are very scarce, and the space for these voices is becoming narrower.

In fact, the US is not only standing against the American public but also against humanity. Gaza has faced a humanitarian disaster. Calling for an end to the disaster is a humanitarian resonance, based on

the value of human life, and is a spontaneous action taken by humanity.

If the US continues to persist in its bias, it will ultimately lead to its failure. ■

The writer is an Assistant Editor of JWT.

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Understanding Geopolitics

Geopolitics is the study of how geography affects politics and international relations. Within the field of geopolitics, analysts study actors—the individuals, organizations, companies and national governments that carry out political, economic and financial activities—and how they interact with one another.

Introduction

Geopolitics is a multidimensional concept that involves the study of the relationship between a state's geographical location, its interests and its behaviour in international relations. It serves as a scientific methodology to explain the behaviour and relationships of a state with other countries. Geopolitics encompasses the use of various tools and capabilities, including information warfare, to gain geopolitical advantage and ensure national security. It also considers the impact of geopolitical factors on the state and legal organization of countries and peoples. While geopolitics plays a significant role in a country's foreign policy, other factors such as national identity and culture also influence foreign policy decisions.

Definition

In simplest terms, geopolitics can be defined as the struggle over the control of geographical entities with an international and global dimension, and the use of such geographical entities for political advantage. Following are some definitions of geopolitics:

a. Rudolph Kjellen

Kjellen was the first who coined the concept of geopolitics in 1899, defining it as: "the theory of the state as a geographical organism or phenomenon in space."

This definition contains two elements that are crucial within the concept of geopolitics: power (influence, politics) and space (territory, soil). The central role for the state as only powerful entity is very typical for this definition.

b. Karl Haushofer

Haushofer, whose ideas inspired the Nazi-regime, added political processes to the definition of

Analyzing international relations, understanding society, examining natural and social changes brought about by globalization or studying political strategies, many activities are intimately linked to geopolitics, a political framework that supports the examination of international affairs in the context of culture, history and geography, in addition to day-to-day political events. In effect, it is making an analysis of yesterday's world in order to better understand today's world, while anticipating tomorrow's.

Ayeza Fatima

geopolitics:

"Geopolitics is the new national science of the state, ... a doctrine on the spatial determinism of all political processes, based on the broad foundations of geography, especially of political geography."

Haushofer considered political geography as an essential part of geopolitics.

c. Saul Bernard Cohen

Cohen used this definition in his 2003 book "Geopolitics of the World System":

"Geopolitics is the analysis of the interaction between, on the one hand, geographical settings and perspectives and, on the other hand, political processes. (...) Both geographical settings and political processes are dynamic, and each influences and is influenced by the other. Geopolitics addresses the consequences of this interaction."

Types

International relations literature and the foreign policy community offer and use multiple definitions of geopolitics. This causes muddy thinking and misunderstandings among scholars, as well as misunderstandings between scholars and policymakers. Amidst these widespread differences, nine different types of geopolitics can be identified:

1. Classical geopolitics;
2. Geopolitics as strategic geography;
3. Cognitive geopolitics;
4. Global geopolitics;
5. Critical geopolitics;
6. Geopolitics as philosophy of statesmen;
7. Anti-geopolitics;
8. Geopolitics as logos, pathos and ethos; and
9. Geopolitics as nexus.

Each of them carries its unique ontological take on geopolitics, as well as lays particular foundations for policymakers.

Understanding the fundamentals

The fundamentals of geopolitics begin with the unique imperatives and constraints of nation-states. They involve looking at all of the attributes that affect a country or a region, dissecting each

piece in order to better understand its implications, then putting them back together and painting a picture clear enough for others to understand. In order, these elements concern geography, politics, economics, military, technology and culture.

a. Geography

Geography affects every element of a country's geopolitical context. In many ways, the geography of a place determines what economic sectors will prosper. It can influence how centralized power may be, as well as a country's susceptibility to invasion or need for alliances. Geography also affects the military needs of a country. Long coastal areas often require a navy; terrain dictates the equipment and skill-set required for an army and a country's general expansiveness determines the size/need for an air force.

Countries that struggle to meet their basic needs - for example, if they have a lack of natural resources or cannot produce enough food with the available arable land - may find themselves vulnerable to outside powers and influence. In this situation, then, limits on food production and farmable land would be a constraint - something that the nation cannot directly overcome with its own power.

b. Politics

Politics, quite simply, means the ways in which a country is governed. The political dynamic of a country directly affects its institutional effectiveness, social stability and international engagement strategy.

c. Economics

The economy of a region or nation-state plays a major role in determining its overall stability and power. A strong economy is often necessary for a strong military and social stability, as well as a number of other things. A country's economic stability, versatility and resource availability have a direct impact on its geopolitical behaviour. For example, countries with excess oil reserves but a deficit of arable land may use economic ties with other countries to secure food and supplies for their populace in exchange for oil and natural gas. Exchanges like this can allow countries to use their strengths to circumvent constraints and better meet their imperatives.

d. Military

The military can protect a country's borders, project power overseas and defend against threats. A strong military can be a major factor in a country's geopolitical power projection and can affect how it interacts with neighbouring countries. Countries under direct threat of foreign military forces must find ways to secure their defence and interests, such as through international alliances or building up their own military in order to balance the power dynamics.

e. Technology

A country's technological capabilities can be a major contributing factor to cultural, economic and military power. Tech for private use, like personal computers and cellphones, as well as major public services, such as public transportation, all contribute to the connectivity of a country and its capabilities to care for itself and for its people. On the global stage, a country or region that establishes itself as a major technological hub can accumulate geopolitical power by controlling intellectual property, creating dependencies and being the cornerstone of critical networks.

f. Culture

Geopolitics explains and predicts how different groups of people interact, and how nation-states at large will interact with each other. In that context, the culture of a place may not be immediately relevant. The nation-state, however, is in many ways the basis upon which modern human communities are organized. People define themselves in part based upon the nation and area that they originate from, and often the values and goals of a state are influenced by what they see as culturally important. From a geopolitical viewpoint, the dynamics of a culture often emerge from the constraints and goals of a nation, meaning that the geopolitical forces and cultural forces can affect and drive one another as time goes on.

How these fundamentals influence strategy

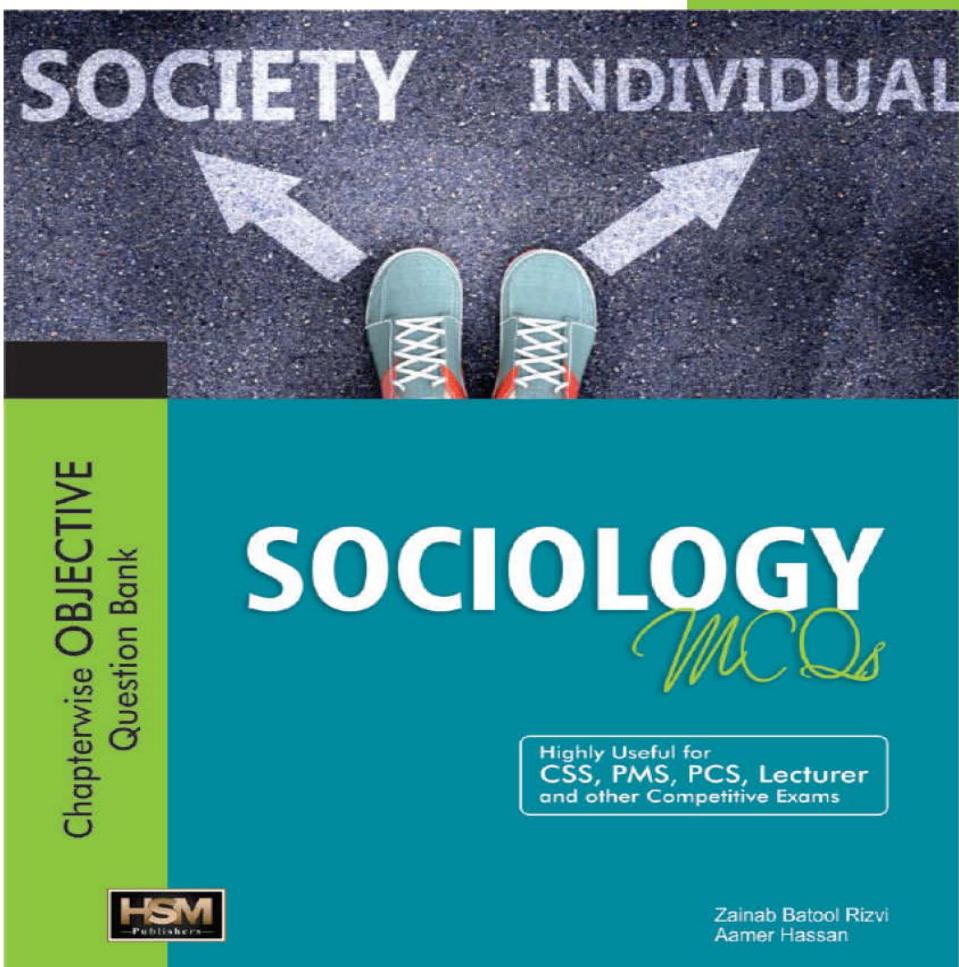
A key question we ask ourselves is: "How do changes in the political, economic and social

landscapes of a region impact the global balance of power? Do these changes affect our understanding of a nation-state's major goals and initiatives?" Geopolitics examines how global shifts in power will change country behaviour such that the ramifications are felt across the global economy and politics.

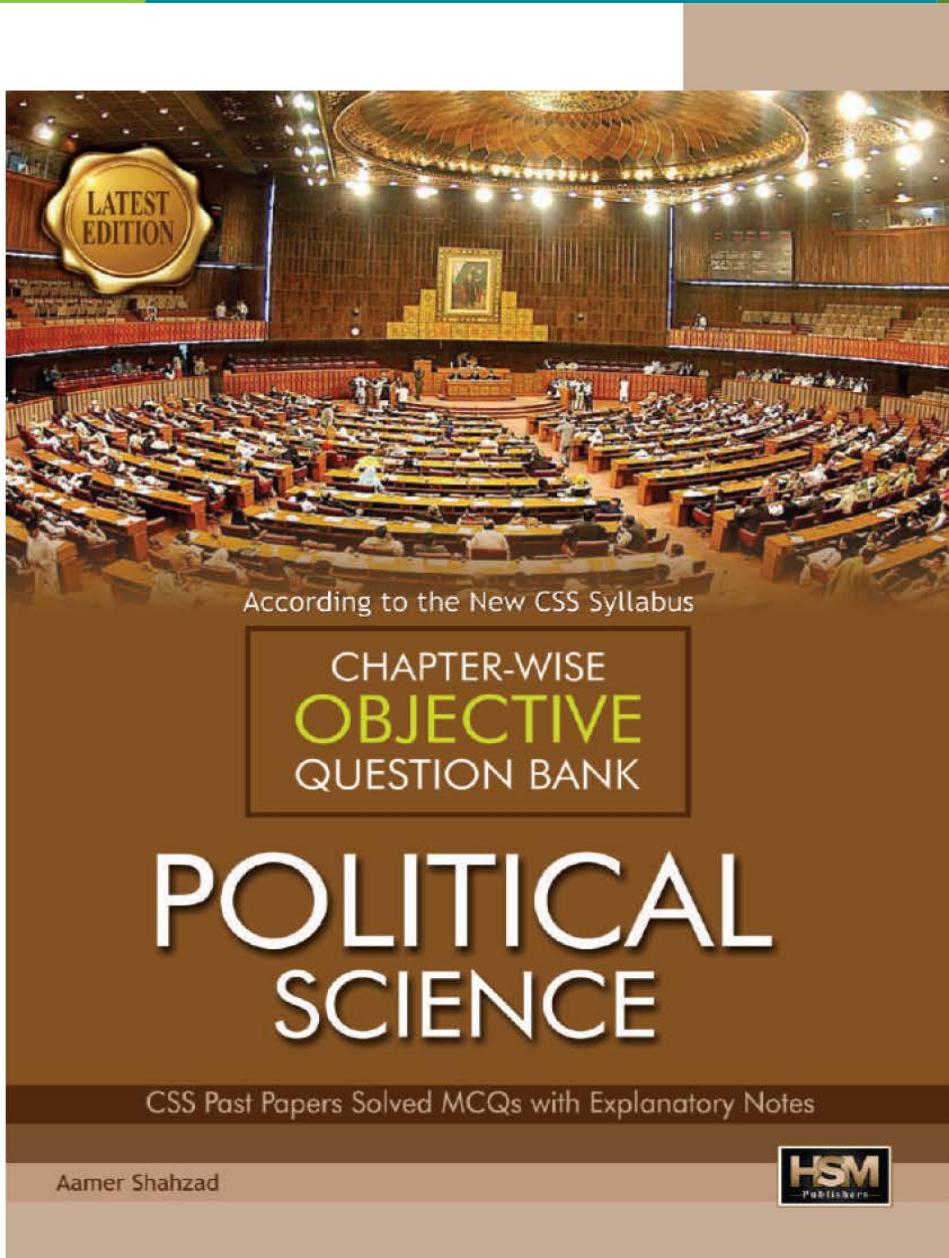
Conclusion

These fundamentals of geopolitics, along with relevant outside factors such as an external country's desire to increase its power and influence in the region - and the conflict this can generate - form the basis for geopolitical analysis and forecasting. It is about looking at these interconnecting factors and evaluating it from a global perspective. It's important to realize that every country and region on earth has to pursue these imperatives constantly. The measure of power is not done within a vacuum, nor is it stagnant. Like everything, with time, geopolitical forces shift and change.

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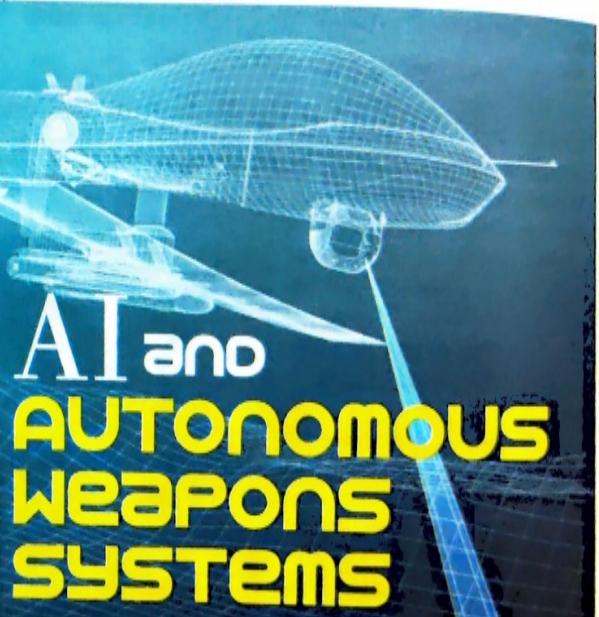
INTERNATIONAL

Artificial Intelligence is one of the hottest buzzwords in the technology arena today, and with good reason. In the last few years, we have seen several innovations and advancements, which used to be thought of as mere science fiction, transform into reality. AI is rapidly advancing to ease our daily tasks, but with this progress come severe risks such as job displacement, identity theft, privacy issues, netiquette breaches and implications in warfare. One area where this technology poses the most daunting challenge is autonomous weapons systems that select and apply force to targets without human intervention. It is especially true because leading world powers are taking an increasing interest in relying on AI, particularly machine learning, to control these weapons.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has not just made a splash but a global tidal wave. Its potential to enhance the lives of people worldwide is staggering. However, the integration of AI technology

Dr Sidra Muqeet

into warfare presents complex challenges. Particularly, the latest AI - known as generative pre-trained transformers (GPT) - promises to utterly transform the geopolitics of war and deterrence. It will



do so in ways that are not necessarily comforting and that may even become existential. On the one hand, this technology could make war less lethal and possibly strengthen deterrence - dramatically expanding the role of AI-directed drones in air forces, navies and armies, human lives could be spared. On the other hand, AI-driven software could lead the major powers to cut down their decision-making window to minutes instead of hours or days. They could come to depend far too much on strategic and tactical assessments made by AI, even when it comes to a nuclear war. The danger is that decision-makers could gradually rely on the new AI as part of command and control of weaponry, since it operates

INTERNATIONAL

at vastly greater speeds than people can. So, there must be some curbs on weapons systems involving the use of AI, and at least some human judgement must be used in developing and deploying autonomous weapon systems.

Today, no sane person can deny that there are potential dangers and risks associated with the technology which we may call the dark side of AI. Characterising this space are risky applications of AI tools in the hands of bad actors with evil intentions. The use of AI in military operations creates fertile ground for both good and bad actors to partake in the dark side of AI.

What are autonomous weapons systems?

Autonomous weapons systems (AWSs) consist of combat equipment or technology that can identify, target and engage the enemy without human intervention. These systems use AI, sensors and other

example, this could be the shape of a military vehicle or the movement of a person. It is the vehicle or the victim that triggers the strike, not the user. The concern with autonomous weapons systems lies in their potential to make life-and-death decisions without meaningful human oversight.

Some concerns

There are ethical, moral, legal and humanitarian concerns regarding their use, including issues related to accountability, unintended harm to civilians and the potential for escalating conflicts. Of particular interest is the moral and ethical dilemma of whether AI (a machine) should make the call to kill a human! It is instructive to note that both good actors (national governments and armies) and bad actors (terrorists and fraudsters) have the potential to have access to AWSs.

Both groups have the propensity to irresponsibly

It is most unfortunate that researchers are crazy to build AI based autonomous weapons systems without understanding that it can destroy humanity in totality.

Amit Ray

technologies to perform tasks that traditionally require human decision-making. AWSs have also been referred to as lethal autonomous weapons systems or killer robots. They range from armed drones and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to ground-based robots and naval vessels. Such systems are designed to carry out missions autonomously, such as surveillance, reconnaissance and combat operations, without direct human control.

A person activates an autonomous weapon, but he hardly knows specifically who or what it will strike, nor precisely where and/or when that strike will occur. This is because an autonomous weapon is triggered by sensors and software, which match what the sensors detect in the environment against a 'target profile'. For

deploy AWSs with devastating effects. Various international organisations and advocacy groups have called for regulations or outright bans on the development and deployment of autonomous weapons systems.

The key objective is to ensure that humans remain in control of decisions regarding the use of lethal force. However, debates about the appropriate regulation of such systems continue among policymakers, ethicists, military leaders and technology experts.

World powers' approaches to AWSs

Among the nations that are leading the development of AWSs, i.e. China and the United States, are at the forefront. Both countries take different approaches to AWSs. While both of them are actively developing AWS, their specific approaches vary.

INTERNATIONAL

a. China's approach

China has been investing extensively in modernising its military, including developing advanced AI and robotics technologies for combat operations. The People's Liberation Army has been exploring the integration of AI and autonomy into various weapons systems, including drones, unmanned vehicles and other platforms. China is rushing to roll out its own AI-run systems, and the effectiveness of armed drones will also take off in the coming years.

b. US approach

Similarly, the United States has a long history of investing in military technology and has been a leader in developing and deploying unmanned systems and AI-enabled weapons. The US military, including the Army, Navy, Air Force and Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency branches, has been researching and testing autonomous systems for various military purposes. The US Defense Department is experimenting with AI bots that can fly a modified F-16 fighter jet. One of the largest, although still nascent, efforts to advance AI is a secretive US Air Force program, Next Generation Air Dominance, under which some 1,000 drone "wingmen," called collaborative combat aircraft, operate alongside 200 piloted planes.

The differences

There are differences between the US and Chinese policies and regulations of AWSs. The US has engaged in discussions and debates regarding these systems' ethical and legal implications. While no specific international treaties or agreements regulate AWSs,

the US Department of Defence has issued policy directives and guidelines on the development and use of autonomous weapons.

China's approach, on the other hand, to policy and regulation regarding AWSs may be less transparent than that of the United States. It has not been as involved in international discussions on the regulation of AWSs and tends to prioritise national sovereignty and security interests in its policy decisions.

However, China is a party to international arms control agreements, and its stance on AWSs may evolve as the technology develops and international norms emerge. The United States has been actively engaged in diplomatic efforts to address concerns about AWSs through international forums, such as the United Nations. It has participated in discussions on arms control and disarmament, including debates on the regulation of autonomous weapons systems.

China's approach to international cooperation and diplomacy on AWSs may be influenced by its broader foreign policy objectives and strategic interests.

Current status of AWSs technology

The increased autonomy of weapons through the introduction of AI will fundamentally transform the future of armed conflict. As explained earlier, AWSs raise profound questions from a legal, ethical, humanitarian and security perspective.

Implications of AI systems making decisions without humans

Obviously, ceding killing decisions to machines leads to autonomous warfare. There is also autonomous cognitive warfare, which entails using autonomous AI

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INCLUDING ENGINEERS, COMPUTING, AI EXPERTS AND ROBOTICISTS IN 37 COUNTRIES HAVE CALLED FOR A BAN ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND DEPLOYMENT OF FULLY AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS.

WHO'S INVOLVED?**AT LEAST 6 STATES**

ARE KNOWN TO BE RESEARCHING, DEVELOPING AND TESTING FULLY AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS:
THE US, THE UK, CHINA, ISRAEL, RUSSIA AND SOUTH KOREA.

44 STATES

HAVE SPOKEN PUBLICLY ON FULLY AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS SINCE THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL DEBATE ON 30 MAY 2013.

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systems to take out, disable or disorient opponents in military operations.

The primary objective of AWSs is reducing human loss while increasing combat power. Given these new battlefield advantages, there is a danger that political and military leaders will find armed and confrontational options less costly or prohibitive.

Thus, it is easier for countries to go to war, as the decision to fight would have been lightened. Once AWSs are commonplace, there is also the challenge of: "How do we end wars?"

How can humans end a war in which they do not control the military operations? What if the AI system makes a mistake and identifies a wrong target? What of other harmful and egregious technology errors? What about autonomous AI-based military cyberattacks?

Indeed, humanity confronts an existential challenge — an unprecedented crossroads — that demands collective and binding global rules and regulations for these weapons.

Widely deployed autonomous weapons integrated with other aspects of military digital technologies could result in a new era of AI-driven warfare.

There has to be worldwide ownership and buy-in for any meaningful AWSs regulatory framework. In 2023, a fully autonomous weapon that uses AI to make its own decisions about who to kill on the battlefield was developed in Ukraine. The drone carried out autonomous attacks on a small scale. While this was a baby step technologically, it is a consequential moral, legal and ethical development.

The next stage is the production of fully autonomous weapons capable of searching out, selecting and assaulting targets without human involvement.

The unconstrained development of autonomous weapons could lead to wars that expand beyond human control, with fewer protections for both combatants and civilians.

Clearly, a wholesale ban on AWSs is neither realistic nor practical. Once the genie is out of the bottle, you cannot put it back! AWSs cannot be un-invented.

How to avert the dangers

Governments can adopt many practical regulations to mitigate the worst dangers of autonomous weapons because, without limits, humanity risks gravitating towards a future of dangerous, machine-driven warfare.

The states should adopt new legally binding rules on autonomous weapons. New rules will help prevent serious risks of harm to civilians and address ethical



concerns, while offering the benefit of legal certainty and stability.

First, unpredictable autonomous weapons should be prohibited. These are designed or used in a manner that their effects cannot be sufficiently understood, predicted and explained — including those that 'learn' targets during use and perhaps machine learning-controlled autonomous weapons in general.

Second, autonomous weapons that are designed and used to apply force against people directly should be prohibited.

Third, there need to be strict restrictions on design and use of all other autonomous weapons to mitigate the risks mentioned above, ensure compliance with the law and address ethical concerns.

Conclusion

AWSs are likely to become more sophisticated and capable due to advancements in AI, robotics and sensor technologies. This could lead to systems with greater autonomy, decision-making capabilities and adaptability on the battlefield.

Society will continue to grapple with the profound legal and ethical challenges surrounding the use of AWSs — accountability, discrimination, proportionality and adherence to international humanitarian law.

Since the proliferation of autonomous weapons could significantly affect international relations and security dynamics, efforts to establish regulations, treaties or guidelines to govern the development and use of such systems must be doubled.

There is also scope for the development of human-machine collaborative systems — human augmentation in military operations. Humans and autonomous weapons can work together synergistically on the battlefield. This approach could leverage the strengths of both humans (e.g. judgement, creativity, empathy) and machines (e.g. speed, precision, efficiency) while mitigating some ethical concerns.

Policymakers, researchers and society must carefully and continuously evaluate and assess the potential impacts and implications of AWSs.

AI must not leave anyone behind. However, it will be remiss of us, an unconscionable dereliction of duty, if we do not seek to understand, anticipate and mitigate the dark side of AI. ■

The writer is a London-based political analyst.

INTERNATIONAL

Dr Mahboob A Khawaja
An independent, reputable citizen journalist, Mike Whitney, captures the prevalent facts in his article "Genocide in Gaza: King Bibi's Land Grab," in these words:

"The assault on Rafah comes despite the acceptance by Hamas ... of a proposal for a temporary cessation of hostilities in exchange for the release of hostages. But after spending weeks attempting to blame the Palestinians for the ongoing war, Israeli officials flatly rejected the proposal ... The cynical and a misleading phrase "Israel's right to defend itself" has become synonymous with the premeditated mass murder of civilians. Most people have never seen anything as horrific and harrowing as Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza, which explains why college campuses across the United States have become hotbeds of political activism almost overnight. Students in America now serve as the nation's conscience by opposing a flagrantly immoral onslaught that deliberately targets defenceless women and children ... If you've ever taken a lifesaving course, you know there's a real possibility that a drowning person will drag you under and you'll both die. It's a lesson that should be kept in mind when discussing America's relationship with Israel."

Israeli PM Netanyahu is not winning the camouflaged political battle; he resorts to an extremely fractured mindset to annihilate the innocent people of Gaza and more so in Rafah. He looks like a despotic figure, not a leader, broken in moral, spiritual and human integrity, lacking distinction between virtue and vice, and using the logic of power as the source of controversial strategies violating the international civilized norms of human safety, conflict resolution and peacemaking. Across the United States, new generations of thinking people demonstrate revulsion against the one-track

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Israel Lost the War
... and America Betrayed Humanity in Gaza

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established political perspective of the State of Israel and its war on Gaza on university campuses, and question the rationality of catastrophic human sufferings, crimes against humanity and the alleged genocide of Palestinians. Ironically, America and Israel are adamantly ignoring the legally binding implications of the ICJ verdict that demands Israel to "prevent all acts of genocide in Gaza."

Western colonialism and the betrayal of Arab-Muslim leaders

The static Arab-Muslim leadership lacking credibility hides under the OIC (The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation), a dry-inked paper entity, to propel its meaningless resolution for the ceasefire and peace in Palestine. Some of those signing the paper have business relationships with Israel. They are being watched and cursed by the Arab masses for their indifference and betrayal of the Islamic principles of helping the helpless victims of war. There are reportedly several thousand Western (German, French, US, and British) mercenaries fighting alongside the Israeli forces in Gaza.

Western mythologists view the oil-exporting Arab leaders as "camel jockeys" and brainless figures. They live in palaces protected by American and European mercenaries while erecting high-rises, organizing

football matches, Olympics and COP28, while 2.5 million are being displaced, more than 34,547 have been massacred across Gaza including some 14,700 innocent children. Israeli attacks on hospitals, places of worship and the killing of civilians go unabatedly.

The Arab-Muslim leaders have no sense of time, history or capacity to defend the interests of Islam, as the Israeli ultranationalists plan to dismantle the 3rd holiest site of Islam, i.e. Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

Planet Earth is living for all; those bombing it are morally and intellectually sick people

The Earth is living and sustains life and all that is needed by all living things. It rotates at a speed of 1000 miles per hour (mph) at the equator and orbits the Sun at an average speed of 67062 mph. The Earth is a "trust" to humankind for its existence, sustenance of life, survival, progress and future-making. Those who bomb the Earth and destroy human lives and habitats are not normal human beings, and God will hold them accountable for the consequences of their crimes against mankind.

"Fear God" and 'do not violate the covenants of peace and trust on Earth', remind the teachings of the Bible, Torah and Quran to all mankind; otherwise, God's punishment to the transgressor will be severe.

Quran says in Surah Ghafir, verse 21):

"Have they not travelled throughout the land to see what was the end of those destroyed before them? They were far superior in might and richer in monuments throughout the land. But Allah seized them for their sins, and they had no protector from Allah."

Those who believe in and follow the Divine Judaism - the generations of Israelites are reminded by God (Quran 2: 84-85):

"And remember when We took your covenant that you would neither shed each other's blood nor expel each other from their homes, you gave your pledge and bore witness. But here you are, killing each other and expelling some of your people from their homes, aiding one another in sin and aggression; and when those expelled come to you as captives, you still ransom them—though expelling them

Ireland, Spain, Norway recognise the State of Palestine

The State of Palestine is recognised as a sovereign state by 146 of the 193 member states of the United Nations



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was unlawful for you. Do you believe in some of the Scripture and reject the rest? Is there any reward for those who do so among you other than disgrace in this worldly life and being subjected to the harshest punishment on the Day of Judgment? For Allah is never unaware of what you do."

And killing of innocent people is prohibited in the Ten Commandments (Torah):

'Thou shalt not kill' (Exod. 20:13; also Deut. 5:17). Jewish law views the shedding of innocent blood very seriously and lists murder as one of three sins (along with idolatry and sexual immorality) which fall under the category of *yehareg ve'al ya'avon* - meaning "One should let himself be killed rather than violate it." According to Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague, 'Jewish law forbids the killing of innocent people, even in the course of a legitimate military engagement.'

PM Netanyahu admits that "Israel stands alone." Do the people of Israel feel confident in his leadership towards peacemaking and global harmony? When egoistic transgressors challenge the sanctity and limits of the laws of God, they become objects of punishment from God and that is how many powerful nations were destroyed in history.

Lessons of history are ignored and how America has lost humanity

If the global institutions were not defunct, the 2.5 million civilians should have been protected by the UN and leading powers, as the Charter makes them obligated in conflict zones. Mass graves of medical professionals and innocent civilians targeted at gunpoint are discovered from three hospitals in Gaza but Western intellect does not call for accountability of the aggressors. What if the Arab-Muslim world had armed forces and honest leaders to protect the people of Gaza?

The American-Israeli war on Gaza and its immediate consequences made the Western world and all of its institutions shamefully redundant in the 21st-century global norms of civility, human rights, freedom, justice and safety of civilians—whereas crimes against humanity are captured in obscure impulses, indecision and deliberate inaction by the UN and the Security Council.

Mike Whitney "Genocide in Gaza: King Bibi's Land Grab," quotes author Lawrence Davidson to answer

some of the critical questions by showing how the transplanting of mainly European Jews to Palestine created 'cultural' and 'racial' incubators for an 'us (superior) vs. them (inferior)' which is fairly common among settler populations. Here's more:

"The founders of modern Zionism were both Jews and Europeans and (as such) had acquired the West's cultural sense of superiority in relation to non-Europeans ... This sense of superiority would play an important role when a deal (the Balfour Declaration) [in which] the British [vowed to] ... help create a 'Jewish national home' in Palestine ... in other European colonies, where large numbers of Europeans resided, the era following World War II saw their eventual evacuation as power shifted over to the natives ... Unfortunately, in the case of Palestine, this process of decolonization never occurred ... And, from a Zionist standpoint, this entire process has worked remarkably well."

Today, all but a handful of Israeli Jews dislike and fear the people they conquered and displaced. They wish they would go away. And, when their resistance gets just a bit too much to bear, they are now quite willing to see them put out of the way."

Like Israel, Palestine is a nation, a human culture but its entire natural visibility is obliterated by Israeli war machines. The animals have no bombs, no guns and no bullets to kill each other and do not reflect on the imperatives of life. We, human beings, are supposed to be intelligent and responsible species on this Earth.

At the edge of reason, the notion of evil leads to the realization that evil and the tyranny of war must be stopped by all means, and those responsible for bombing innocents, genocide and crimes against humanity must be held accountable to restore the vision of a sustainable moral and intellectual humanity.

Dr. Mahboob A. Khawaja specializes in international affairs-global security, peace and conflict resolution with keen interests in Islamic-Western comparative cultures and civilizations. He is the author of several publications, including the latest: One Humanity and the Remaking of Global Peace, Security and Conflict Resolution. Germany.





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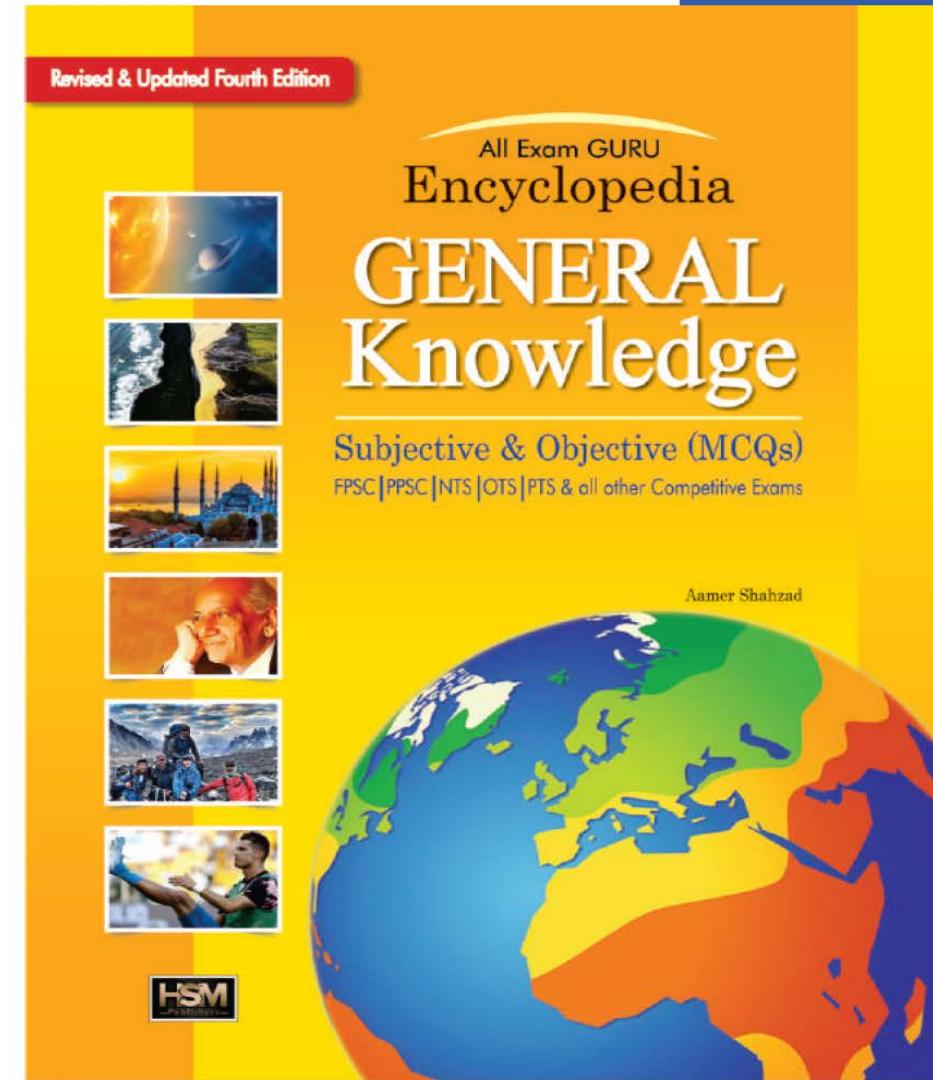
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Why do we need BIODIVERSITY

The Earth's biological resources are vital to humanity's economic and social development. As a result, there is growing recognition that biological diversity – the variety of living organisms, including various animals, plants and microorganisms, the genes they have, and the ecosystems formed by them, present in a specific geographical region – is a global asset of tremendous value to present and future generations. At the same time, the threat to species and ecosystems has never been as great as it is today. These species face various threats, such as habitat loss, poaching and pollution. Even the extinction of species caused by human activities continues at an alarming rate. Therefore, it is essential to take urgent action to protect them and conserve the rich biodiversity our planet has been bestowed with by nature.

M. Usman Butt

ourselves against Nature and with our actions – and inactions – we are killing biodiversity. And, with the loss of biodiversity, we are continuously losing the biological wealth of our planet. Thus, protecting biodiversity, conserving an ecosystem and finding ways to conserve

Biodiversity plays a critical role for human health and well-being, economic prosperity, food safety and security and other important areas necessary for the individual and collective wellness of all human societies. But, reckless development activities, the need for agricultural land to feed and shelter the ever-growing human population, coupled with the proliferation of invasive species, have adversely impacted this delicate web of life. It seems that the modern human culture of materialistic economic development fails to understand that more than half of the world's GDP comes directly from nature. Alas, a flawed understanding of development and growth has led us to juxtapose

biodiversity are really important.

What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity refers to the variety of life and ecosystems that inhabit Earth at multiple levels: from the genetic pool to species biodiversity and the ecosystems that support life. It is the variety and differences among living organisms from all sources, including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part. Thus, in essence, biodiversity represents all life and variability within it.

Definition

To define biodiversity in simple terms, it's the sum total of all the variety of living organisms on earth. In

The role of AI in biodiversity conservation

AI is emerging as a powerful ally for communities engaged in conservation efforts. The synergy between AI and conservation has the potential to enhance our ability to monitor and safeguard ecosystems, mitigate human-wildlife conflicts, optimize resource management and foster sustainable coexistence between people and wildlife. In this context, AI is not just a technological advancement but a catalyst for empowering conservation stakeholders (including local communities) and strengthening their capacity to protect the planet's biodiversity and the livelihoods of the people who depend on it — everyone on the planet.

In 2024, AI's role in conservation is growing, with applications in habitat monitoring, wildlife protection, data analysis and pattern recognition. AI-equipped drones and remote sensing tech are enhancing cost-effective conservation. Also, AI is increasingly used in conservation decision-making and policy formulation to speed up responses to emerging threats like disease surveillance, for example.

Predictive modelling and species distribution: AI algorithms use existing data to develop predictive models that estimate species distribution and habitat suitability. This information is valuable for identifying areas of high conservation priority and planning conservation interventions. AI also helps forecast the impacts of climate change on species and ecosystems, aiding in adaptation planning.

Wildlife monitoring and anti-poaching efforts: AI-powered technologies like sensors are used for wildlife monitoring and anti-poaching efforts. Algorithms analyze real-time video and image feeds to support ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction (Eco-DRR), detect and identify wildlife, including endangered species, and trigger alerts for potential poaching activities. This helps law-enforcement agencies respond quickly and effectively.

more simple terms, it is the variety of the natural world around us that provides the building blocks for life, e.g. clean water and air, food and a stable climate. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) defines biodiversity as, "the variability among living organisms from all sources, including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems."

The term biological diversity was used first by Arthur Harris (1916), an American botanist, in his article "The Variable Desert" published in a science magazine called, The Scientific Monthly as part of a statement: "The bare statement that the region contains a flora rich in genera and species and of diverse geographic origin or affinity is entirely inadequate as a description of its real biological diversity". The term "biodiversity" was first coined by Walter G. Rosen in 1985.

Types

a. Genetic diversity

It is the variations in the genetic makeup of individuals within a species. Just as every human has a unique genetic makeup, there are different varieties within the same species of rice, wheat, maize, barley and others. Genetic diversity is crucial as it contributes to species' adaptation and survival in shifting environmental conditions.

b. Species Diversity

At the most basic level, species diversity refers to the variety of different species found in a specific area. It includes all life forms, from towering trees and colourful birds to invisible microorganisms. Each individual within a species is unique — for instance, humans show a vast diversity among themselves, with

no two individuals being exactly alike — just look at fingerprints on your hands. It is this richness and complexity of life forms, of species diversity, that lends robustness and resilience to our ecosystems.

c. Ecological diversity

It refers to the diversity of different biological communities or ecosystems like rain forests, deserts, mangroves, corals, etc. The greater the variety of ecosystems, the higher the potential biodiversity as it can accommodate a wider array of species. Ecosystem diversity can, therefore, be an effective measure for a region's biodiversity.

Measurement of diversities

a. Alpha diversity

Diversity within a particular area or ecosystem is represented by alpha diversity. The number of species in an ecosystem, also known as species richness, indicates its level of biodiversity.

b. Beta diversity

It is a difference in diversity between ecosystems, usually measured as the change in the number of species among the ecosystems.

c. Gamma Diversity

It measures the overall diversity of the different ecosystems within a region.

Why is biodiversity important?

Ecosystems around the world rely on biodiversity to function properly. It's like an intricate puzzle, where everything needs to fit together just right. Protecting places, like forests and oceans, for example, is particularly crucial because they clean and distribute water, absorb carbon dioxide and protect us from natural disasters. Following are some important points in this regard:

a. Ecological contribution

The higher the biodiversity, the more resilient the ecosystem is to climate change, diseases or disasters. The reduction in genetic diversity of agricultural plants, owing to the popular adoption of monoculture, has repeatedly threatened output volumes. An exemplary case is that of the banana, which is threatened by Panama disease, a fungal outbreak.

Different species play a cardinal role in maintaining ecosystems.

Foundation species like corals create and maintain a healthy ecosystem.

Keystone species like sea stars keep the populations of all other species balanced. In the Yellowstone Park ecosystem, the US government's organized removal of grey wolves, a keystone species (due to interference with human populations), catalyzed the degradation of the entire ecosystem. Soon after, the species was reintroduced in the area. Similarly, umbrella species support the existence of several other species, and then there are ecosystem engineers like trees and beavers that are crucial to their habitat as they physically modify it. The implication is that eradication or imbalance in the populations of any single species influences life on Earth.

b. Economic value

The World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report (2022) lists biodiversity loss as a top economic threat. Nearly 1.6 billion people depend on forests for their livelihoods. Fishing is yet another primary sector activity that engages a significant proportion of the world's population. Healthy ecosystems are the foundation of the ecotourism industry. Coral reefs (presently under high corrosion due to increasing ocean acidification and temperatures due to climate change) and the beautiful, diverse life they support generate huge economic outputs from tourism.

c. Ecosystem services

Richer biodiversity influences the quality of ecosystem services, which include, but are not limited to:

- reduction in air pollution through natural carbon sequestration.
- water filtration
- wetlands filter chemicals, sediments and excess ions from water. Microorganisms and algae remove excessive nitrogen due to fertilizer use and prevent the formation of aquatic dead zones.

**d. Disaster protection**

Mangroves protect the landscape from cyclones and tsunami-related destruction. Soil biodiversity protects the landscape from floods.

e. Food security

A healthy variety of pollinator species like birds and bees supports agriculture and sources of food. Healthy aquatic ecosystems (like coral reefs) and clean waters support a variety of seafood.

f. Human health

The natural appeal of diverse ecosystems boosts mental health. They also provide a better environmental ambience for exercise. In addition to leisure time, they hold spiritual value for humanity.

Loss of biodiversity

It is the loss of species, ecosystems or genes. The planet's biological wealth is decreasing rapidly. Over the past 500 years, the IUCN Red List has recorded the extinction of 784 species, including 338 vertebrates, 359 invertebrates and 87 plants.

According to the Living Planet report, in the last 20 years, there has been the disappearance of more than 30 species. The current rate of species extinction is between 100 and 1000 extinctions per 10,000 species over a span of 100 years. The report, which measures the abundance of biodiversity, shows a consistent downward trend. On average, populations of monitored species have declined by 58% since 1970.

Major causes**1. Habitat loss and fragmentation**

The conversion of natural habitats into agricultural land, urban areas and infrastructure development leads to the destruction and fragmentation of habitats, which is the primary cause of biodiversity loss.

2. Climate change

Global warming and the resulting changes in climate patterns have altered habitats, making it challenging for organisms to perform their natural functions or adapt to new conditions.

3. Overhunting

Overhunting of a species to meet high demand for meat or animal byproducts, for sport, or due to pest control is one of the main drivers of species extinction.

4. Overfishing

Unsustainable methods of fishing have destroyed seafloor habitats, which are important nursery areas for many species. This has had the knock-off effect of

changing marine ecosystem structures.

5. Invasive species

Humans have introduced more than 37,000 invasive species, many harmful, into biomes around the world, threatening a range of plants and animals.

6. Pollution

Air, soil and water pollution can harm species by degrading their habitats, physically harming them, or increasing their vulnerability to diseases or predation.

7. Disease

Organisms have developed natural defences against disease-inducing microbes native to their region. However, when human activity contaminates ecosystems with non-native microbes, indigenous species are not equipped to combat them.

8. Genetic pollution

The release of genetically modified organisms or the hybridization of closely related species may lead to the loss of genetic diversity.

9. Ocean acidification

Increases in carbon dioxide levels are responsible for the acidification of oceans, which makes it difficult for marine organisms, like corals, plankton or shellfish, to maintain their protective coating.

10. Ecosystem simplification

The conversion of complex, diverse ecosystems into simplified ones, such as monocultures or urban areas, reduces the number of niches available for species and decreases ecosystem resilience.

Biodiversity conservation

Planet Earth consists of a rich diversity, which is very important for the survival of mankind. Along with that, biodiversity is also an important source of food, shelter, clothes, firewood, pharmaceuticals, etc. So, it's very important for the survival of all living beings. Conservation of biodiversity occurs in two types.

a. In-situ (on-site) conservation

When the protection of plants and animals is done within their natural habitat or in protected areas, it is called in-situ conservation. In such conservation, land area or sea is dedicated to the protection process and to maintaining equality in biodiversity. This type of conservation is cheap and affordable. It conserves organisms at different trophic levels.

Examples

- **National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries:** Oldest National Park is Yellowstone in the USA.

- **Biosphere Reserves:** It is a kind of ecosystem that is composed of both living beings i.e. biotic components and non-living biotic components from which they derive energy and nutrients.

b. Ex-situ (off-site) conservation

Conservation of plants and animals which is done outside of their natural habitat is called ex-

situ conservation.

Examples

Zoos, captive breeding, aquarium, botanical gardens, gene banks, etc.

Global efforts to tackle biodiversity loss

a. International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

It facilitates coordinated efforts by nations, NGOs, scientists and government agencies. It has brought about World Commission on Protected Areas for preserving biodiversity through national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, forest reserves, zoological parks and botanical gardens.

b. UNEP

The United Nations Environment Program engages in assessment and monitoring of biodiversity crises on a global level. It brought about the establishment of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which has been effective since 1993, also holds Conference of Parties regularly to assess issues related to different biomes, conservation and sustainable usage of biodiversity. The Cartagena protocol on biosafety protects biodiversity from the threat of genetically modified organisms.

c. UNESCO

It launched Man And Biosphere (MAB) program under which opening of biosphere reserves was initiated to conserve biodiversity.

d. World Wide Fund for Nature

WWF is an NGO rigorously engaged in biodiversity conservation which is one of its primary objectives.

e. Global Environmental Facility

Established in 1991, it provides financial aid for biodiversity and environmental projects.

f. Ramsar Convention (1971)

It was signed to conserve wetlands and allow their sustainable use.

g. Bonn Convention (1979)

It looks after conservation of migratory wild animals. The Japan-Australia bilateral agreement also works to protect migratory birds. ☐

*The writer is an Assistant
Editor of JWT.*

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Asia's geopolitics is changing, with 'America's best friend in Asia' witnessing a transformation of its role in the region and the world at large. The Japan-US strategic relationship and Japan's active participation in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD), commonly known as the Quad, are evidence of the fact that Japan is all poised to counter China in the region with the backing of the US. Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's meeting with US president Joe Biden on April 11 has further cemented their bilateral relationship, which is pivotal for the US in realizing its Indo-Pacific or Pivot to Asia strategy, while Japan sees this as an opportunity to expand its security role within the constraints of its pacifist constitution. It is now almost clear that Japan will assume an enhanced role in regional security affairs, but those burdens will not come lightly as not only will its defense budgets grow, it also risks involvement in crises that could expand into conflicts.

With a more assertive China, a nuclear-armed North Korea and a revisionist Russia, the US-Japan alliance is critical to both countries' interests in Asia. Forged in the wake of World War II, the alliance of the two countries is fast emerging as a formidable player in today's Asian geopolitics. A recent episode in this growing Japanese influence came on April 11 when US President Joe Biden hosted Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the White House for wide-ranging talks that especially touched on the delicate security situation in the Pacific. During the summit, the two leaders unveiled plans for military cooperation and strengthening their alliance with an eye on countering China and Russia. A joint news conference at the White House reflected the growing importance of Japan on the world stage and to the United States, as the two leaders weighed in on Gaza and Israel, Ukraine and Russia, North Korea and other world flashpoints.

"Unilateral attempts to change status quo by force or coercion are absolutely unacceptable, wherever they may be... The US and Japan will continue to respond to such actions, including challenges from China, Kishida said.

Since the United States and Japan have been bolstering their militaries to counter what they see as a growing

threat from China in the South China Sea and the East China Sea, the developments from this summit, indeed, have announced the arrival of a new, assertive Japan to the world.

The China factor

China's increasing assertiveness and its global ambitions have prompted concerns within the US-Japan alliance. At the heart of tensions between China and Japan is a long-standing territorial dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, a cluster of uninhabited islets in the East China Sea. Washington has maintained a neutral stance on the islands' sovereignty. However, since the Obama administration, the United States has considered the islands to be administered by Japan and thus covered by the US-Japan security treaty.

In response to China's increased assertiveness, recent US administrations have shifted strategic focus to the Indo-Pacific, beginning with Obama's 2011 pivot or rebalance to Asia, which sought to strengthen ties with partners in the region, including Japan. The Donald Trump administration revived the Quad, a security arrangement among the United States, Australia, India and Japan, over concerns about China's behaviour. Biden further committed to the Quad, convening

Japan's Growing Role in Asian Geopolitics

With an eye on China US and Japan elevate their ties

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ngs where the leaders agreed to expand cooperation on vaccines, climate change, technology and supply-chain resilience. According to Japan's 2022 updated National Security Strategy, the US-Japan alliance is at the center of promoting Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific initiative, a set of principles for peace, prosperity and security in the region.

Despite the importance of Japan's close economic ties with China, the former's national security strategy labels the latter as an "unprecedented strategic challenge." Furthermore, Tokyo has, in recent years, angered Beijing by voicing concerns about human rights in Hong Kong and Xinjiang, Chinese maritime actions and stability in the Taiwan Strait.

Taiwan, in particular, has become the subject of increasing focus in Tokyo, located just 68 miles (110 kilometers) from Yonaguni Island - the westernmost point of Japan. In 2021, former Prime Minister Abe declared that "a Taiwan emergency is a Japanese emergency," and therefore, also an emergency for the US-Japan alliance. Japan's defense strategy that same year emphasized for the first time the importance of maintaining stability across the Taiwan Strait for Japan's security, and Japanese defense officials have called for the country to defend Taiwan in the event of war.

A major turning point in Japan's approach to Taiwan came when China fired missiles that landed in Japan's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) after then US Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, visited Taiwan in 2022. Over the past decade, Japan has built military bases on its southwestern islands, which could prove critical during a "Taiwan contingency" given their proximity, particularly Yonaguni (established in 2016), Miyako (2019), and most recently, Ishigaki (2023). Recent reports suggest Japan plans to increase its military personnel, expand the existing bases for training, and deploy military equipment

to the islands in preparation of a possible conflict in the Taiwan Strait.

In 2023, the United States conducted a joint military exercise with Japan on Ishigaki. Meanwhile, the partners have also held military drills with allies in the South China Sea. In April 2024, the United States, Australia, Japan and the Philippines conducted joint naval drills in the Philippines's EEZ ahead of a US-Japan-Philippines trilateral summit in Washington. There are also reports that the United States, Japan and the Philippines plan to launch joint naval patrols in the South China Sea later in the year.

Japan's transformation

Today, Japan is set to become a major military power, transform its famed civilian industrial capability into a military industrial complex, and turn from being a US protectorate into an American partner and a significant contributor to Asian and Indo-Pacific security.

This is the second Japanese transition over the last decade.

a. The first transition

In the mid-2000s, Japan began to articulate ideas for a new security architecture in Asia. Take, for instance, the concept of the Indo-Pacific, the single most important geopolitical idea of the 21st century. The late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe first spoke about the strategic unity of the two oceans (Indian and Pacific) during his visit to India in 2007. Since then, Japan has invested enormous diplomatic, political and financial resources to popularise this geopolitical construct that was eventually adopted by Australia, Indonesia, India and the United States.

b. The second transition

In the second transition unfolding today, Japan is matching its strategic ideas with military resources and the political will to actively reshape the regional security order. Kishida's visit to Washington DC was, in effect, the unveiling of a new geopolitical Japan. The US has long pressed Japan to take a more active security role in Asia. But Japan, comfortable with its commercial focus, has been unwilling. A mix of external and internal factors has contributed to its reorientation in the 21st century.

On the external front, four elements have come together: the rise of China and its military assertion, especially on the territorial disputes with Japan; the deepening military bonds between Beijing and Moscow and the coordination of their policies in North



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East Asia; the growing military capabilities of North Korea; and the fears triggered by the Trump Administration that the US could withdraw its security protection to Japan and other Asian allies. Together, these factors have profoundly altered Japan's regional security environment, and demanded fresh thinking. Internally, this situation strengthened conservatives in Tokyo, who wanted to see Japan becoming a 'normal power'. They argued that Japan has done enough to

prove its credentials as a responsible player in world affairs, and the time has come for it to take responsibility for its own security, and to contribute to the regional order.

How is Japan emerging as a geopolitical power?

- First, Japan has done away with the historical cap on defence expenditure, unofficially at 1% of its GDP. According to data from the World Bank, in 2020, Japan's military expenditure touched 1% of GDP for the first time in six decades. In 2022, it touched 1.1%. Kishida's government has pledged to double annual defence spending to around 10 trillion yen (\$68 billion) by 2027, which would make Japan the world's third-biggest military spender after the US and China.
- Second, Japan has acquired, and is in the process of further acquiring, its own counter-strike capability in the form of cruise missiles. In January 2024, it signed a deal with the US to

Japan's Diplomatic Journey

Before World War II

Seclusion (1600s-1850s)

For over 200 years, Japan remained largely closed off from the world. This policy of isolation aimed to preserve social order and prevent foreign influence.

Catching Up (1850s-1900s)

The arrival of Portuguese Commodore Perry's "Black Ships" in 1853 forced Japan out of its self-imposed seclusion. The Japanese government:

- modernised the military and adopted Western technology to become a strong nation.
- renegotiated previous treaties to regain control of its trade and foreign policy.

Aggressive Stance (1900s-1930s)

Despite its victories, Japan wasn't treated as a full equal by Western powers, particularly regarding racial equality (e.g. rejection of the racial equality clause in the Treaty of Versailles).

This frustration with the West fuelled a shift towards aggressive expansionism like the militaristic takeover of Manchuria in 1931, formed the Axis Alliance before World War II, etc.

This sense of disrespect and a desire to challenge the West-dominated world order ultimately led Japan down a path of militaristic conquest that culminated in World War II.

After World War II

After the defeat of Japan in World War II, the United States led the Allies in the occupation and rehabilitation of the Japanese state. Thus, Japan embraced a policy of pacifism.

Military spending was strictly limited, and the nation focused on rebuilding its economy. This strategy

proved wildly successful, propelling Japan to become the world's second-largest economy by the 1970s.

Over the recent decades, Japan has undergone a significant shift in its diplomatic posture, moving away from strict post-war pacifism and towards a more assertive role on the world stage.

Why Change in Diplomatic Posture

External Factors

China's Rise: China's growing military power and assertive claims in the East China Sea, particularly regarding disputed territories like the Senkaku Islands, have created a sense of urgency for Japan to strengthen its defences.

North Korean Threat: North Korea's continued development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles remains a major security concern for Japan.

Uncertain US Commitment: The perceived erosion of US commitment to Asian security under the Trump administration, along with the rise of isolationist tendencies in the US, has pushed Japan to become more self-reliant in its defence.

Examples include the failure of the USA's Middle East policy in maintaining peace.

Internal Factors

Conservative Resurgence: A growing number of conservative voices in Japan advocate for a more active security role and argue that Japan, as a "normal power," has a responsibility to contribute to regional stability and defend its interests.

Pacifist Fatigue: Decades of relying solely on the US for security have led some to question the sustainability of this approach, especially in the face of a changing regional landscape.

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purchase up to 400 Tomahawk cruise missiles, capable of striking deep into China and North Korea. From relying entirely on the US to building up its own deterrent capabilities is a major shift.

Third, late last year, Japan's cabinet eased its self-imposed ban on exports of lethal weapons to friendly countries. This has paved the way for the leveraging of Japan's immense manufacturing and technological base to aid its allies at a time when their own production capacities cannot keep up with the likes of China and Russia.

- For instance, immediately after the easing of the export ban, Japan approved a shipment of Japanese-made Patriot missiles to the US. Along with the United Kingdom and Italy, Japan is leading the Global Combat Air Programme, a multinational initiative to develop the BAE Systems Tempest, a proposed sixth-generation stealth fighter. During Kishida's visit, Japan and the US finalised the creation of a joint military industrial council to facilitate the co-production of weapons.

- Fourth, Japan and the US are in the process of revising the command-and-control framework governing their defence forces, with plans to eventually significantly integrate the command structure. Currently, the US operates military bases in mainland Japan and Okinawa Island, but its command structure is in Hawaii, the headquarters of the US Indo-Pacific Command. A joint operations command will be set up in Japan going forward.

Changes in Japan's diplomatic posture

First, Japan has made attempts to end disputes with South Korea, inherited from Imperial Japan's occupation of the Korean peninsula from 1910 to 1945. The reconciliation has facilitated greater regional security coordination, and has helped the US move from a system of bilateral alliances in Asia to a regional security network, in which US allies work with each other.

Second, Japan has been one of Ukraine's

strongest supporters in the war with Russia. It has offered Ukraine a lot of aid for reconstruction, and has sent some weapons as well. Japan has been alone in Asia to make a clear case for defending Ukraine's territorial sovereignty. Kishida has often said that "Ukraine could be the future of Asia" if the principle of respecting territorial sovereignty is not defended in Europe.

In his address to Congress, the Japanese leader almost chastised Republicans for their reluctance to extend more support to Ukraine. "... I detect an undercurrent of self-doubt among some Americans about what your role in the world should be," Kishida told Congress. "Ukraine of today may be East Asia of tomorrow... Japan will continue to stand with Ukraine," he said.

It was a powerful statement, signalling Japan's willingness to weigh in on the US domestic debate on Ukraine, and to encourage Republicans in Congress to rethink their opposition to sending more military assistance to Kyiv.

Implications of a 'new' Japan

Japan was among the most powerful countries in World War II, with a fearsome military that marched all the way to India's border. After decades of pacifism, a politically active and militarily more capable Japan will inevitably re-arrange the regional security calculus. Despite the widespread fear that the policies outlined by Kishida, whose political stature has been in decline at home, may not last, structural factors are likely to ensure broad continuity in Japan's new orientation. The potential return of Donald Trump to the White House is also intensifying the effort in Tokyo to insure against an American turn towards isolationism.

The writer is a member of staff.



With the warming trend almost doubling since the period from 1960–1990, Asia is heating up faster than the global average. It remained the world's most disaster-affected region in 2023 and many countries in the region experienced their hottest year on record, along with a barrage of extreme conditions, from droughts and heatwaves to floods and storms. Climate change has exacerbated the frequency and severity of extreme weather events that profoundly impact societies, economies and, most importantly, human lives. Amidst these alarming trends, urgent action is imperative to mitigate the escalating climate crisis. The need for proactive measures to curb greenhouse gas emissions and bolster resilience against climate-related disasters has never been more pressing, as Asia, and the world at large, confront the daunting challenges posed by a rapidly warming planet.



Asia is struggling with extreme climate events like floods and heatwaves, with record-breaking temperatures and precipitation across its countries. In 2023, the region bore the brunt of heat surge, experiencing

alarming warming rates. The UN's weather and climate agency, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), has sounded this alarm in its 'The State of the Climate in Asia 2023' report, revealing that, in 2023, heatwaves across Asia were intensifying, posing grave threats to the region's water security as glaciers melted at an alarming pace. The report also noted an "alarming gap" between climate projections and the ability of Asian countries to adapt to and mitigate climate change and its impacts.

"The report's conclusions are sobering. Many countries in the region experienced their hottest year on record in 2023, along with a barrage of extreme conditions, from droughts and heatwaves to floods and storms," said Celeste Saulo, WMO Secretary-General.

Key highlights *Buy CSS PMS Books Online*
1. Hottest year *0332-5339708*

The year 2023 was the warmest year on record according to six globally averaged datasets. The years 2015 to 2023 were the nine warmest years on record in all datasets.

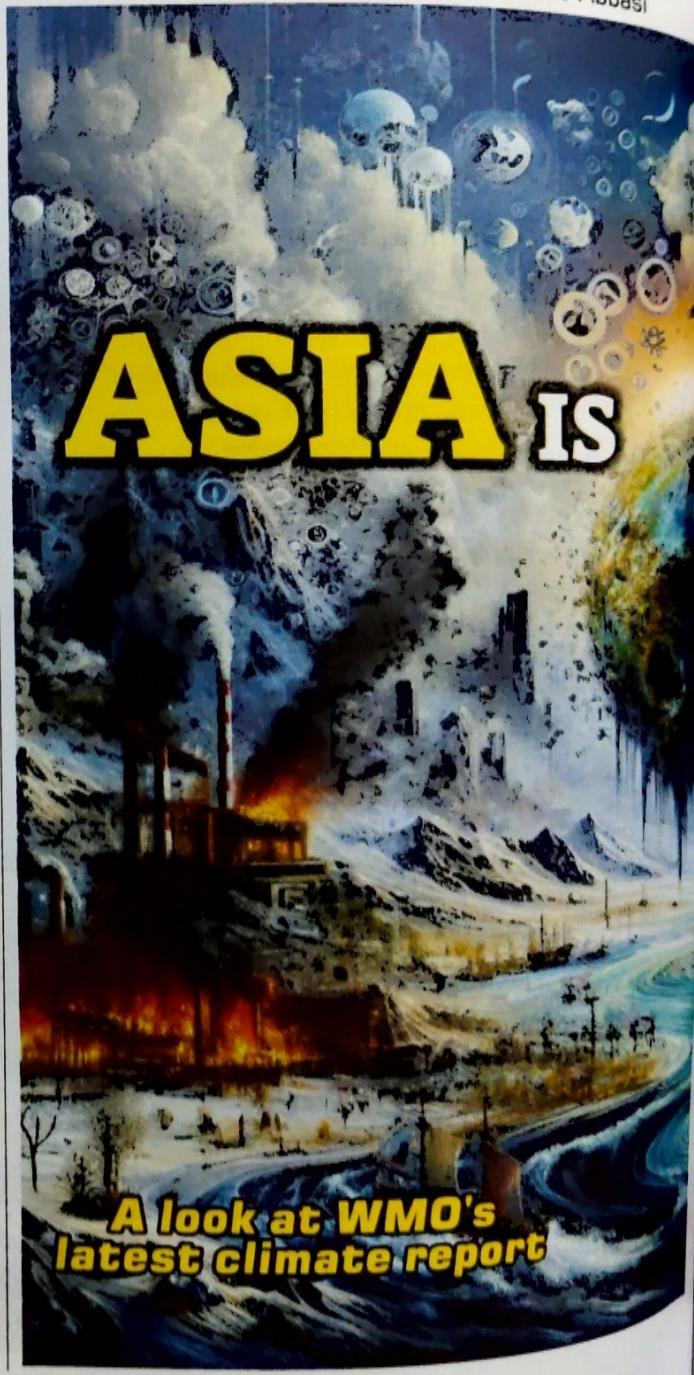
The global annual mean near-surface temperature in 2023 was $1.45 \pm 0.12^\circ\text{C}$ above the 1850–1900 pre-industrial average.

Over the past two decades, the ocean warming rate has increased; the ocean heat content in 2023 was the highest on record.

- Ocean warming and accelerated loss of ice mass from the ice sheets contributed to the rise of the global mean sea level by 4.77 mm per year between 2014 and 2023, reaching a new record high in 2023.

Asia, the continent with the largest land mass extending to the Arctic, has warmed faster than the global

Aftab Abbasi



INTERNATIONAL

land and ocean average.

2. Sea Surface Temperature

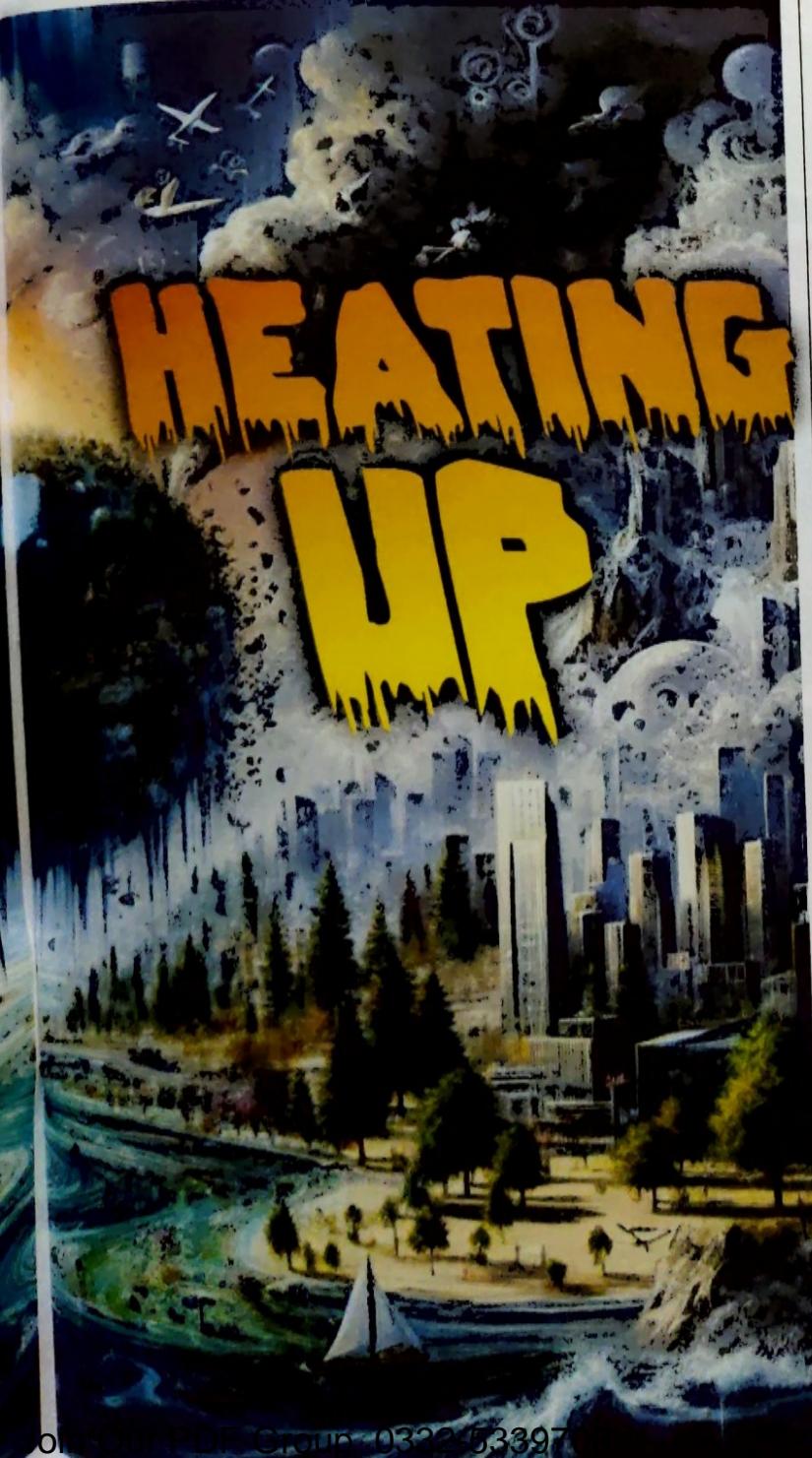
Global average sea surface temperatures have been unusually high since mid-March 2023.

The North-west Pacific Ocean experienced the warmest sea surface temperature anomalies on record.

Warming of the upper-ocean in specific areas, such as the North-Western Arabian Sea and the seas east of Japan, exceeded the global average by more than three times.

3. Hydrometeorological hazards

Asia is warming faster than the global average. The



About WMO

Full Form	World Meteorological Organization
Formation	23 March 1950
Parent Organisation	United Nations Economic and Social Council
Headquarters	Geneva, Switzerland
Type	United Nations specialised agency
Member	193 Member States and Territories

warming trend has nearly doubled since the 1961-1990 period.

Asia has faced the most number of disasters in the world in 2023. There have been recorded instances of 79 events associated with hydrometeorological hazards like extreme weather, climate and water-related hazards. These events, which were 80% flood and storm events, have affected over nine million people in the region and directly resulted in the loss of over 2,000 lives.

- In 2023, vulnerable countries were disproportionately impacted. For example, tropical cyclone Mocha, the strongest cyclone in the Bay of Bengal in the last decade, hit Bangladesh and Myanmar.
- Over 60% of the 2,000 deaths have been associated with flooding and more than 15% of the deaths were linked to storms.

4. Temperatures

Variations in surface temperature and precipitation have a large impact on natural systems and on human beings.

Asia recorded its second-highest mean temperature on record in 2023, contributing to the ongoing melting of glaciers in the High Mountain Asia region, which holds a significant ice volume outside the polar areas.

- Japan and Kazakhstan observed record warm years while Thailand achieved the highest mean temperature ever recorded in August, as well as a severe rainfall deficit.
- Average temperatures were below normal in parts of the inland Indian Peninsula.
- The High Mountain Asia region, containing the largest volume of ice outside of the polar regions, is under threat due to melting glaciers.

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by 1.2°C relative to the 1961–1990 period, exceeding global warming.

5. Precipitation patterns

Precipitation is a key climate parameter, essential for society in terms of providing water for drinking and domestic purposes, agriculture, industry and hydropower. Variations in precipitation also drive major climate events such as droughts and floods.

Precipitation was below normal across almost the entire Asian region in 2023.

- Rainfall was below normal in parts of Turkmenistan, Pakistan, Myanmar and India in 2023.
- Summer monsoon season rainfall in India was about 6% below the 1971–2000 average.

Excess rainfall was observed in certain regions, such as the lower course of the Indus River (Pakistan) and the Tenasserim Range (Myanmar).

Despite overall less precipitation, over 80% of reported hydrometeorological hazards in Asia were flood and storm events, leading to fatalities and affecting millions.

- Floods were the leading cause of death in reported events, particularly in India, Yemen and Pakistan.

5. Extreme weather events

Floods and Storms: In 2023, the Asian region was struck by severe floods and storms, which cost a huge number of deaths and the economic loss in the region.

Heatwaves: India was hit by severe heat waves between April and June and approximately 110 persons were put to death due to the phenomenon. Thailand, additionally, achieved the highest mean temperature ever recorded in August, as well as a severe rainfall deficit.

Droughts: Longer periods of outbreak in Australia, India and the South-East Asian region called for urgent restructures in water management and agriculture.

6. Glaciers

In the glaciological year 2022–2023, 20 out of 22 observed glaciers in the High Mountain Asia region – a high-elevation area centred on the Tibetan Plateau – showed continued mass loss.

This happened primarily due to record-breaking high temperatures and dry conditions in the East Himalayas.

In the past 40 years, these glaciers have recorded significant mass losses, with an increase in the rate of mass loss since the mid-1990s.

6. Regional hotspots

South Asia: Climate changes and weather triple down temperatures and severe weather events badly impact

the food integrity, water resources and human health. **Southeast Asia:** Unexpected flooding, rising water levels and droughts affect coastal settlements, their agriculture and unique living resources.

East Asia: The alterations in temperature and rainfall are also detrimental to agricultural systems, forestry and human development.

The case of Pakistan

Pakistanis would understand the contents of the WMO report very well, no doubt, since it mentions that many countries in the region experienced their hottest year on record in 2023, “along with a barrage of extreme conditions, from droughts and heatwaves to floods and storms”.

Countries like Pakistan have now got used to all such events every year, and factor in losses to the exchequer and human lives ahead of time. But going forward, as glaciers continue to melt and rain patterns become more erratic, there's a growing fear that some countries, like Pakistan, do not have the resources to face such challenges as they continue to mount.

Climate change is, therefore, not only responsible for thousands of lives every year, but also for crippling economies that are already struggling to stand on their own feet. Pakistan, once again, provides the best example. With the economy already struggling to achieve some sort of growth trajectory, another rain-and-flood season that shaves a couple of percentage points off GDP – which has been known to happen – could well push it over the cliff.

Conclusion

The writing is on the wall. The time for incremental steps is over. The scale of the challenge requires bold, decisive actions that reflect the urgency of the moment. For Pakistan, and Asia at large, building resilience is no longer a matter of choice but a necessity for survival in an era marked by unprecedented climatic upheaval. As we advance through 2024, let this be the year when we all proactively ensure that our communities are safeguarded and that the future is secure against the inevitable next storm. ☐

The writer is a member of staff.

We are at a critical juncture, where the impact of climate change intersects with societal inequalities. It is imperative that our actions and strategies mirror the urgency of these times. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the evolving climate is not merely an option, but a fundamental necessity. — Prof. Celeste Saulo (WMO's Secretary-General)

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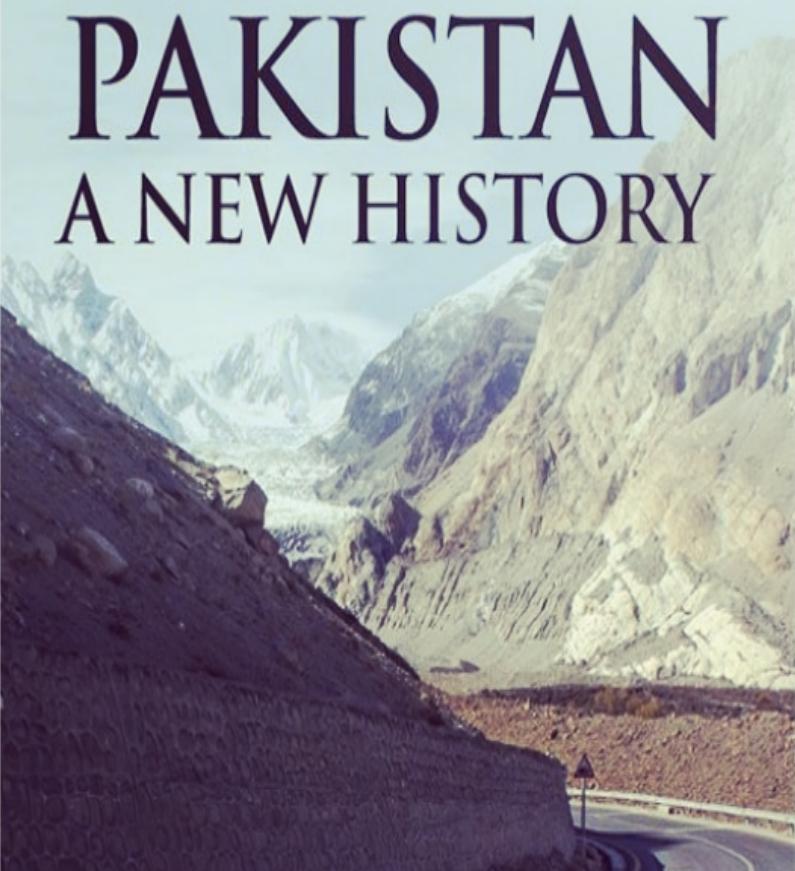
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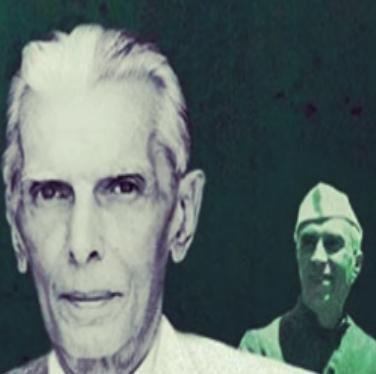
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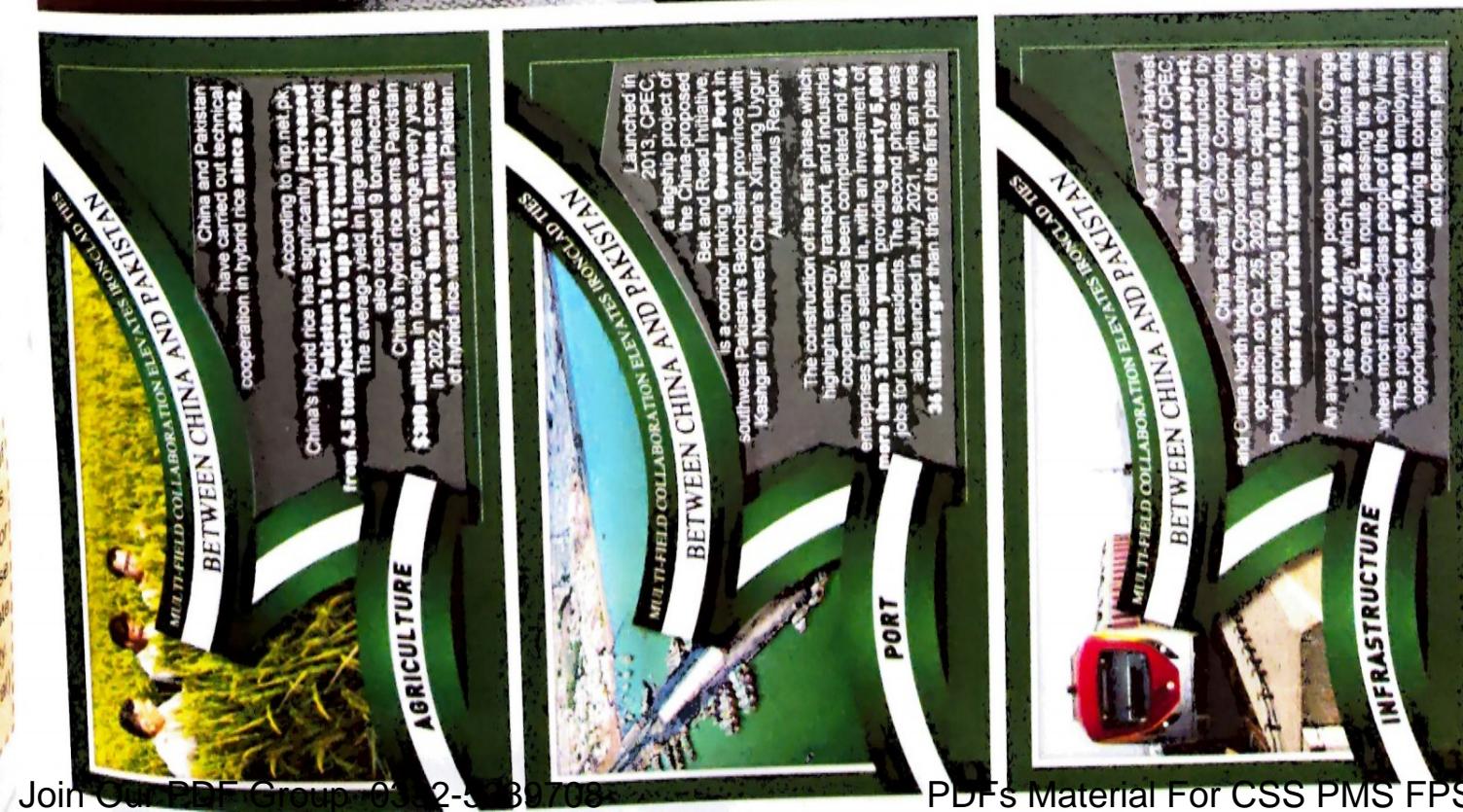
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Introduction

Theoretically, lawmaking should be responsive to local and internal factors. Contrary to this, more often than not, the legislation in Pakistan aims at addressing external issues. In the recent past, Pakistan amended its criminal laws related to terrorism and money laundering to exit the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). In a similar spirit, on 22nd November 2022, the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Act, 2022, was enacted in response to the conditions attached to the inclusion of Pakistan on the Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP Plus) list for the European Union (EU). This, however, does not mean that indigenous needs are not addressed by the legislature. There are instances when lawmaking has been done in response to purely local reasons. For example, the Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Act, 2019, was introduced to strengthen the system of information exchange, protection and prevention of offences against children. The purpose of this adumbration is to examine the latest torture law with special reference to its genesis, characteristics and the way it affects the criminal justice system of Pakistan.

Genesis of the Law

The genesis of the new law, as noted above, is in the EU's GSP Plus programme, which Pakistan wanted to benefit from. In addition to this external consideration, the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973, requires that no one shall be subjected to torture for extracting evidence; this is stated as not a salutary principle, but as a justiciable fundamental right. Accordingly, Pakistan was obliged to criminalize torture as it had ratified the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984 (CAT), in 2010. Likewise, Pakistan was obliged to follow the law as it had undertaken many other international human rights laws, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). All these revert back to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which also affected CAT.

Salient Features

The new law on torture has many significant salient features, as it provides a substantial and procedural legislative framework. These are:

Wider net of applicability

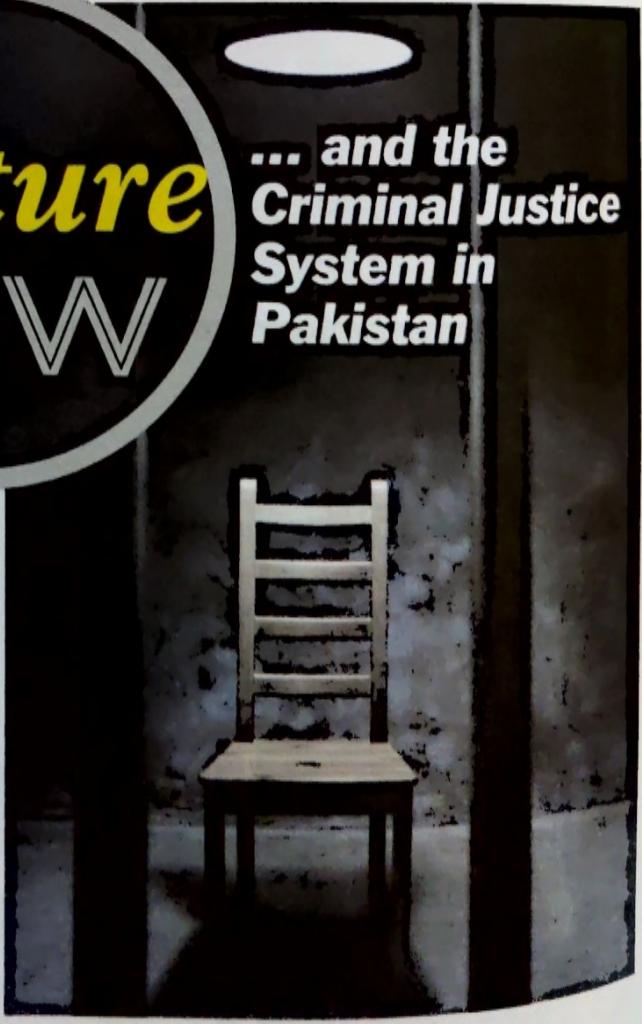
Until then, there were no specific definitions of the terms 'cruel', 'inhuman', 'degrading treatment', 'custodial death' and 'torture'. The law, for the first time, has defined these terms. Interestingly, the terms have been defined not in a narrow but in an expansive manner; ergo, a wider net of applicability. For example, the explanations for custodial death include 'private' medical premises. It also includes the 'vehicle' to cover cases during transportation.

New offences

The law criminalizes many actions that were not *stricto sensu* offences within the meaning of offence under the criminal law. In this way, the new category of offences has actualized the fundamental right not to be subjected to torture. The new offences include: Using illegally obtained evidence has been criminalized. Prior to this, there was a debate about whether the metaphorical 'fruits of a poisonous

Torture Law

... and the
Criminal Justice
System in
Pakistan



tree could be eaten or not' vis-à-vis the use of evidence extracted out of torture, but with the new penal section, there is hardly any debate left on the point whether illegally obtained evidence can be used in a criminal trial or not.

Torture, custodial death and custodial rape have been penalized by linking these to the general criminal law (i.e. as contained in the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860).

Gender-responsive legislation

The law in its present form is gender-responsive. The procedural caveats contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, and the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act, 2021, specifically provide:

- No female to be held in custody by a male police officer; if required, there must be a female police officer present;
- No information to be extracted from a female;
- A separate and new offence of custodial rape has been introduced in the law.

The legal provision obliges the police organizations in the country to make sure that during the investigation, or interrogation, there is a female police officer; this is likely to encourage further gender parity in the police organizations in Pakistan, which are already attracting female officers at all levels due to the gender quota reserved at the time of recruitment.

Special investigation mechanism

The law provides that only the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) shall have 'exclusive' jurisdiction to investigate cases under the new torture law. There is, however, no legal provision in the legislation that obliges the police organizations to refer cases to the FIA as required by the law. Precisely, for this reason, there are writs pending adjudication before the Lahore High Court. In addition, the Magistrates have been enabled to notify cases to be sent to the FIA.

Referral system

There is no specific provision obliging the provincial police organizations and other law-enforcement agencies/investigation agencies to refer cases to the FIA under the law; therefore, there is a need to amend the law to provide for the referral mechanism. The referral system is also important as the FIA does not register criminal cases in the first instance and, owing to its procedural requirements, has to first carry out an inquiry into a

case to ascertain whether the charging under the new torture law is made out or not. The area is too unimportant to be left to the investigation agencies, as there is little or no incentive for them to take up these cases. The area needs to be streamlined through proper legislation, at least by covering it in the rules to be made under the law.

Senior trial and appellate courts

Irrespective of the quantum of punishment for the offence for which an accused is charged, the law authorizes the Court of Sessions to try the cases and the appeal against conviction or acquittal may lie to the High Court.

Accountability

The law provides for suspension, transfer and departmental action against the delinquent public official (who may or may not be from a police organization). This is an important provision and is likely to be used in the future in high-profile human rights' violation cases.

Time-bound investigation, trial and appeal

Time is of essence in criminal prosecutions in Pakistan. Unfortunately, no legal consequences flow from a delay in meeting the deadlines/timelines. Anyhow, the law provides that the investigation is to be completed within 30 days, the trial in 3 weeks and the appeal in 30 days.

Special protection

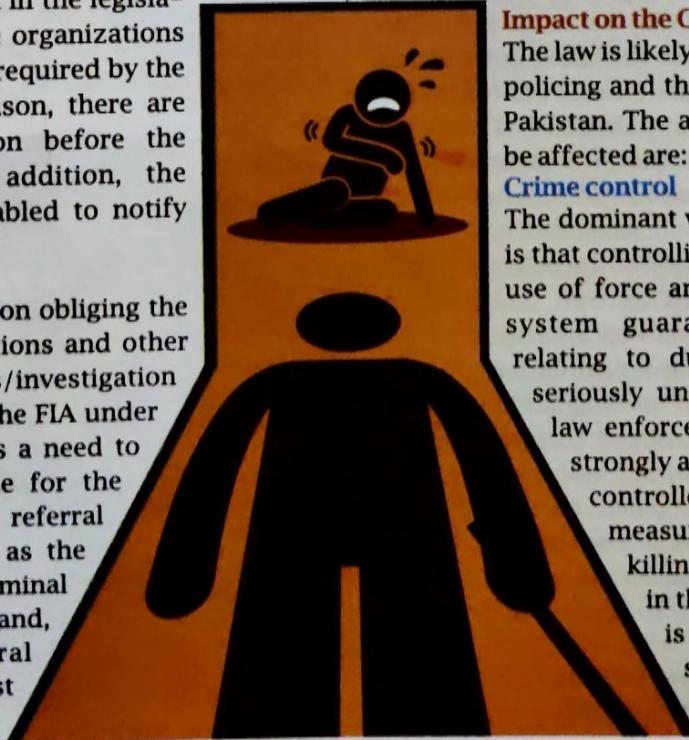
On the pattern of witness protection laws, the law provides for protection of victims and witnesses under the law.

Impact on the Criminal Justice System

The law is likely to impact a lot of aspects of policing and the criminal justice system in Pakistan. The areas that are most likely to be affected are:

Crime control

The dominant view in police organizations is that controlling crime is a function of the use of force and that the criminal justice system guarantees, especially those relating to due process and fair trial, seriously undermine the deterrence of law enforcement. This dominant view strongly argues that crime can only be controlled by taking extra-legal measures, including extra-judicial killings, to instil a fear of the law in the hearts of criminals. There is no empirical evidence to support this viewpoint; however, the implementa-



tion of the new law is seen as a major disruption to crime fighting.

Primacy of the federal government

Pakistan is a federation where the criminal law, the criminal procedure and the law of evidence are concurrent subjects to be legislated upon by both the federation and the provinces. As most of the law enforcement work is done by the provincial police organizations, the new law, which is federal in nature, requires that the investigation of provincial police organizations' excesses be 'exclusively' done by the FIA; this arrangement provides primacy to the federal government over the provincial governments.

Role of prosecution

Prosecution departments have been established in all four provinces and at the federal level. The law does not imagine any role for prosecutors. There is a strong case to introduce a regulated referral system in which prosecutors can play an important role within the scheme of the law.

Compounding of offences

The law does not touch upon the substantive law and to the criminal justice processes that affect the rights of police officers, who, while dealing with entrenched and organized crime syndicates) have to face legal battles. To strike a balance, the law must provide for the effect of compounding on the investigations and prosecutions under the new law.

Police laws

There was no provision prohibiting torture in the colonial Police Act, 1861. In 2002, the Police Order was promulgated for the whole country. The law criminalized police excesses, including torture and unlawful and vexatious arrests. It may be noted that, at that time, Pakistan had not ratified CAT, but owing to internal necessities, the law was made to put the police on professional lines. After the Eighteenth Constitutional Amendment, in the name of provincialization of the police laws, each province enacted its own law, while the Punjab retained the Police Order, 2002. On the pattern of the Police Order, 2002, the KP Police Act, 2017 and the Sindh Police Act, 2019 also criminalized torture and other police excesses. In addition, the Sindh Police Act, 2019 provided for an oversight mechanism outside the police hierarchy to check the cases of police excesses, including torture.

Comparative perspectives

In India, in the absence of robust statutory law on the subject, efforts were made to introduce 'custody

jurisprudence'. The Draft Prevention of Torture Bill was written in 2008 and is pending consideration by the legislature. It may be noted that India has yet to ratify the CAT. In the UK, there is a long history of the subject. It is arguable whether the Privy Council ever issued the torture warrant, but one thing is certain: after Felton's Case in 1628, no torture warrant was issued. There is a long history of common law declaring torture illegal. Finally, in 1988, torture was criminalized through a statute in the UK. The US Constitution criminalized torture in 1791. Even the International Humanitarian Law (the law of war) prohibits torture. In the recent past, in order to prevent acts of terrorism, some scholars (like Harvard Law School Professor Allan M. Dershowitz) argued in favour of legalizing torture warrants based on the pattern of arrest and search warrants.

Concluding Remarks

Rights to life, to be treated in accordance with the law, and to be treated with dignity are some of the fundamental rights that form the core of the constitutional criminal law in Pakistan, requiring that the criminal justice system must be reformed and should not be broken. The new torture law is an opportunity to change the direction of law enforcement towards the rule of law instead of towards the rule by law. □

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PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE System

in Punjab and Sindh

According to the 7th Population and Housing Census 2023, the population of Pakistan is around 244 million. Punjab is the largest province, with a population of 127.68 million, whereas the population of Sindh province is 55.69 million. There are approximately 14.8 million children of ages up to 4 years who are to be safeguarded from diseases like childhood tuberculosis, diarrhoea, diphtheria, hepatitis B, measles, meningitis, pertussis (whooping cough), pneumonia, polio, tetanus, rubella and typhoid.



The government of Pakistan, with the assistance of international donors, including Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (hereinafter GAVI), Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and others, established the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) in 1978 for the vaccination of children to prevent them from diseases mentioned earlier. The EPI also receives support from implementing partners, including the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and USAID. After the 18th Constitutional Amendment, the government of Punjab is conducting EPI through the Primary and Secondary Health Care Department whereas the Health Department of Sindh is conducting EPI in the province of Sindh.

The EPI in Punjab aims to protect 4.12 million children against 12 vaccine-preventive diseases, whereas that in Sindh aims to protect 1.9 million children aged up to 11 months as well as 1.97 million pregnant women.

Fully immunized children (those who have completed their immunizations including the measles-rubella dose given at 9 months of age) in

NATIONAL

families and the healthcare system. EPI has focused on reaching marginalized and hard-to-reach populations, reducing disparities in immunization coverage. The impact of the policies under the EPI in Sindh includes a reduction in mortality and morbidity resulting from the nine EPI target diseases by immunizing children aged 0-11 months and women of childbearing age. The EPI has had a significant impact on reducing vaccine-preventable diseases in Sindh, but there is still a need to increase vaccination coverage, especially in hard-to-reach areas.

Interventions to improve public service delivery

The Primary and Secondary Health Care Department of Punjab and the Health Department of Sindh have taken several key initiatives for enhancing the coverage of immunization:

The Primary and Secondary Health Care Department of Punjab

EPI Punjab has improved service delivery in four key areas:

- (a) Urban immunization by mapping urban slums and vaccinating all due/defaulters through urban campaigns.
- (b) Access to EPI services by introducing birth dose administration, evening and night shift EPI services and establishing new EPI centres.
- (c) Enhance demand-generation activities by improving branding at existing EPI centres and introducing call-back mechanisms.
- (d) Monitoring & accountability by using EMR to track vaccinators and conducting EPI routines to regularly track progress.

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Effective monitoring of EPI through digitalization—the flagship EMR Dashboard allows the tracking of vaccinators in real time. Polygon coverage facilitates vaccine tracking through geographical coverage. Outreach geographical coverage is tracked regularly through EMR.

EPI Punjab focuses on four key areas of EPI communication:

- (a) Using all media to disseminate key messages—its own (media 360) and government social media—activities (such as ACSM) tailored to specific communities are



organized in
targeted areas;

(b) stage plays and street theatres are organized, besides events for academia;

(c) program follows SOPs for risk and crisis communication and conducts trainings of concerned staff for emergencies and collaboration and coordination is conducted with all potential partners to maximize the impact. (For example, World Immunization Week to improve community engagement.)

The number of vaccinator seats increased from 4,000 to 6,100 and also increased the fixed sites with 24/7 labour room vaccination birth doses at all public hospitals.

(d) Primary and secondary healthcare services have been separated from tertiary healthcare services. As a result, more resources are diverted from tertiary to primary and secondary healthcare services.

Efficient utilization of the allocated budget: Almost 100% of the released budget utilized in 2022 and 2023.

The Health Department of Sindh

- Increased public service delivery through refurbishment and rebranding of more than 400 EPI centres, the introduction and scaling of 24/7 birth dose immunization activities in public and private hospitals, the introduction of integrated mobile vans, evening outreach activities in polio-high-risk slums, and 14 ISD facilities in SHRUCs, established by partners, have been transitioned to the department.

- Increased human resource in poor-performance districts under the Sindh Healthcare Resource Upgradation Program (SHRUP) through two urban immunizations, 488 Covid vaccinators, 55 vaccinators, district data entry operators, 20 District Monitors and 3 District Disease Surveillance Officers (DDSOs).

- Enhanced accountability was achieved through regular quarterly and monthly review meetings at the provincial and district levels, departmental proceedings against absconders/low

vaccinators and the implementation of a provincial and district Plan of Action.

- Effective supervision through Provincial Managerial and Monitoring System (PMMS) to monitor and manage the EPI.

- Created awareness campaigns by launching a paediatric dose campaign in Karachi and Hyderabad in 2022, an oral cholera campaign in 10 UCs of three high-risk districts in Sept.-Oct. 2022, a measles Rubella vaccination campaign and Rubella Immunization antigen activity implemented in flood affected districts in Nov 2022 and awareness seminars at the provincial level chaired by the minister for health, Sindh.

- Capacity building of human resource engaged under EPI through training of district staff on micro-planning, mobile lady mobilizers (MLM), surveillance

research and encourages health awareness and quality healthcare delivery.

Health clinics and outreach programs are run by NGOs like Aga Khan Health Services and Hands Pakistan, which also educate communities on health and hygiene, provide support for vaccination and nutrition programs and collaborate with the government to make a bigger impact.

Essential medical services, vaccination guidance, disease awareness, diagnosis, treatment and health education are delivered by healthcare providers. Local bodies and community health initiatives offer a range of services, including health education programs, healthcare access, physical activity promotion, nutrition programs, substance abuse prevention, mental health initiatives, immunization campaigns and community safety.

Political leaders play crucial roles in preventing healthcare issues by enacting laws and policies promoting healthcare access and funding and allocating budgets for healthcare infrastructure and programs. Further, they are involved in implementing changes to improve healthcare delivery and access.

Water and Sanitation

Agencies (WASAs) play crucial roles in preventing healthcare issues by ensuring access to safe drinking water, reducing waterborne diseases, properly disposing of waste, preventing environmental health hazards and educating communities on handwashing and proper hygiene practices. Furthermore, it collaborates with health authorities to monitor and respond to outbreaks.

There are many international stakeholders, like the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, USAID and GAVI which are involved at different levels of preventive healthcare system. They provide guidance, financial assistance, vaccines, etc. ☐

The writer studied Taxation Policy & Management at Keio University, Japan, and is serving as Additional Commissioner (Inland Revenue), Corporate Tax Office, Lahore.



and waste management, sentinel sites and the provincial expanded immunization program -expanded program on immunization (PEI-EPI) synergy framework to increase coordination and knowledge-sharing.

- The cold chain management system improved by implementing Child Census and Enrollment Operation Phases (CCEOP) I, II and III, and by enhancing cold chain capacity from 110,000 litres in 2014 to 850,000 liters in 2022.

- The Sindh government has enforced the Sindh Immunization and Epidemics Control Act 2023.

Role of stakeholders in improving public service delivery

The Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination develops health policies, sets regulations, coordinates health efforts, manages public health programs, supports disease control and

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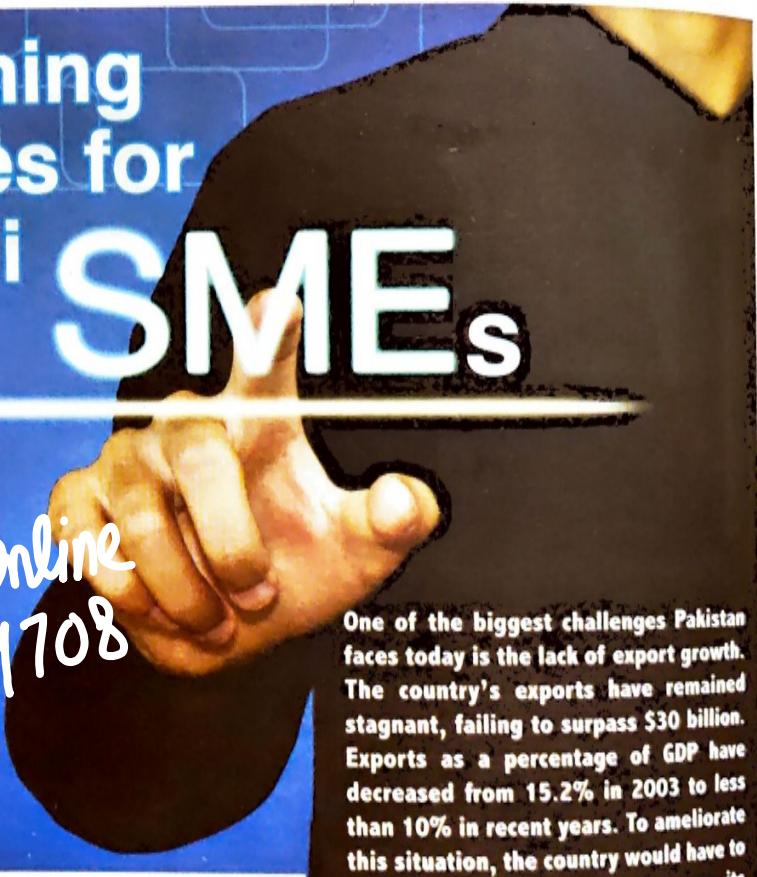
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Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are often referred to as the engine of growth because they not only produce a significant proportion of goods and services but also offer substantial employment opportunities. According to a 2015 report by the International Labour Organisation on SMEs and decent employment creation, firms with less than 250 employees

cantly to employment and gross domestic product (GDP). However, the ongoing currency crisis, dollar shortage and rampant inflation have together devastated this sector. This, in turn, has had a severe impact on employment rate and the country's overall economic growth. The neglect at the official level, continues despite the fact that the SMEs contribute around 40% to the GDP and account for

Uzair Salman is based on data from 50 financial institutions, 18 focused group discussions, and 362 SMEs across 11 cities. The report says, "Creating a level playing field for SMEs and enhancing their economic efficiency is critical as they play a pivotal role in employment and income generation and achieving governments' long-term sustainable economic development goals." Following are some important

Overcoming Obstacles for Pakistani SMEs



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One of the biggest challenges Pakistan faces today is the lack of export growth. The country's exports have remained stagnant, failing to surpass \$30 billion. Exports as a percentage of GDP have decreased from 15.2% in 2003 to less than 10% in recent years. To ameliorate this situation, the country would have to explore new resources to increase its income, otherwise all the generated revenue would be spent on debt servicing. In this context, it is apt to say that the one sector that can play an overwhelming role in boosting Pakistan's exports is that of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) which, in the words of Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, have to "potential to generate around \$40 billion annually through export-oriented businesses."

accounted for over 60% of total employment in low-income and lower-middle-income countries, and over 70% of total employment in South Asia. Low-income and low-middle-income countries have a higher proportion of informal SMEs, leading to challenges in terms of wages and productivity growth due to business obstacles. But, in Pakistan, SMEs contribute signifi-

around 26% of exports in the manufacturing sector. The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) recently published an extensive study titled "Enhancing Economic Efficiency of SMEs in Pakistan," which identifies barriers to competition and provides recommendations for improving the economic efficiency of SMEs. The study

findings of the study, followed by some recommendations the CCP has put forward:

Important findings

- a. Globally, SMEs comprise almost 90% of businesses and employ more than half the global workforce.
- b. Formal/registered SMEs in developing markets contribute roughly 40% to GDP and generate at least seven out of ten jobs.
- c. The International Finance Corporation (IFC) finds that the SME sector creates 9 out of 10 jobs in developed countries and 7 out of 10 in emerging markets.
- d. According to World Bank estimates, by the year 2030, 600 million jobs will be needed to ensure the market is able to absorb the rapidly expanding labour force globally, providing a strong impetus for prioritizing SME development for many governments.
- e. With over 5.2 million SMEs in Pakistan, the sector represents approximately 90% of businesses, contributing 40% to the country's GDP and 30% to the total exports.
- f. The sector also employs around 80% of non-agriculture labour force in Pakistan.
- g. Women make up almost half of the population in Pakistan, while their labour force participation is only 24.6%.
- h. The country has only 1% female entrepreneurs compared to 21% male entrepreneurs.
- i. SMEs face increased competition in the market due to changing market demand, innovation and technological change, capacity constraints and creativity.
- j. These businesses are unable to realize their full potential due to a lack of financial resources, skilled labour, market access, asymmetric information and small-scale operations.
- k. Owing to these barriers, SMEs

are unable to generate economies of scale and scope, have high transaction costs, limited information about global markets and are unable to compete with larger domestic and multinational enterprises.

l. Financial access is critical for SMEs' growth and development. In their early stages of development, SMEs are less likely to obtain loans from financial institutions compared with large firms.

m. In Pakistan, the demand for SME financing is estimated in the range of Rs.3-4 trillion. Out of this total demand, only 15-20 percent is met by formal funding, whereas the remaining is met through informal channels, including family and friends and the remaining demand remains unmet.

n. Despite policy measures to increase financing to 17%, the SME sector in Pakistan only receives 6-7% of private sector financing.

o. A comparison with regional countries shows that the sector receives 25% financing in Bangladesh and 18% in India.

p. SBP data reveals that women SMEs received only 3.2% of the total SME lending in 2022.

q. Data from FIs reveal that SMEs receive over 80% of the financing, and only two financial institutions achieved the SME lending targets set by the SBP during 2018-2020.

r. Pakistan's business environment faces a complex and non-conducive tax structure which adds a burden on businesses. The study data reveals that SMEs find it difficult to comply with the existing tax system.

s. The withholding tax deduction from the registered SMEs is a challenge due to the existence of a large informal/unregistered SME sector.

t. Pakistan's startup land-

scape is still a novice, with the most progress in the last 5-8 years.

Recommendations

a. The study has identified issues with the SME definition based on annual turnover criteria. The lack of differentiation between small enterprises (SEs) and microenterprises (MEs) annual turnover, along with the wide benchmark for medium enterprises (MEs), creates challenges. These thresholds can hinder SMEs' access to finance. To enhance access to finance, it recommends rationalising the SME definition by considering annual turnovers more effectively.

b. The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) should consider allocating separate SE and ME lending targets for financial institutions, setting sector-specific targets, establishing separate financing facilities for poor districts and introducing standardized pricing of insurance and evaluation reports.

c. Public sector commercial banks should be encouraged to take the lead in SME financing, and top-tier banks may be given mandatory credit targets to increase lending to small enterprises (SEs).

d. Additionally, a framework needs to be developed by the SBP for greater engagement of small chambers of commerce.

e. There is a need to enhance the funds available under various SBP credit guarantee schemes for micro and SMEs.



f. Non-bank financial institutions, leasing companies, crowdfunding and equity financing can play an important role in providing credit to startups and SMEs.

g. An improvement in the regulatory environment for these alternate channels is required.

h. There are at least 12 different categories of general regulatory layers applicable to all firms doing business in Pakistan. In the manufacturing sector alone, a total of 50 laws and numerous secondary regulations are enforced by over 40 national and subnational agencies and departments.

i. To simplify the system of licencing and registration, it is proposed to develop one-stop portals for issuing licences, permits and registrations for SMEs.

j. Additionally, a critical review of regulatory duties in various sectors is necessary, as they make imported raw materials expensive for downstream businesses.

k. Since SMEs find it increasingly difficult to comply with the existing tax system, the study has recommended that the tax structure be based on fairness, efficiency,



convenience and certainty.

l. The study emphasises the need to safeguard the interests of SMEs in existing special economic zones (SEZs) and industrial parks.

m. It recommends engaging small chambers on the board of SEZs and ensuring that land is made available to SMEs at affordable rates.

n. Enacting an MSME Act has also been proposed to provide clarity in enforcing rights within a framework.

o. To address the prevalent lack of the requisite skills and training to efficiently conduct their businesses, it recommends that federal/provincial authorities invest greater funds in technical and vocational education and training institutions, with a focus on the latest learning output, systems and use of technology.

p. Non-operational training institutes should also be fast-tracked.

q. Higher education institutions and business incubation centres should be utilized and prioritized.

r. To address gender disparity in SME sector, the study recommends having women's departments and women-led SMEs in the National Coordination Committee to give suggestions in policy and legislation for women's inclusion.

s. Enhanced financial inclusion can be achieved by requiring financial institutions to maintain a certain percentage of financing for women entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the maximum limit of SBP's refinance and credit guarantee scheme for women entrepreneurs should be enhanced.

t. To promote the growth of the sector, it is proposed to create dedicated SME desks across the banking network to educate, guide and facilitate SMEs.

u. Capacity building for banking staff dealing with SMEs has also been recommended. □

Uzair is a student at KEMU, Lahore.

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Energising the SME Sector

The new government has drawn up a plan to provide affordable credit facilities to SMEs. The Finance Division has coordinated with several banks and a scheme has been drawn up by the State Bank of Pakistan to make it easier for SMEs to access bank loans.

Over the years, numerous attempts have been made to promote SME financing, but these have failed to leave the desired impact as a significant portion of such businesses too often remains undocumented and operates in the informal economy, and are thus unable to fulfil basic banking requirements related to assessing credit worthiness and risk.

Attributing SMEs' resistance to enter the formal sector solely to their reluctance to become part of the tax net, therefore, is far too simplistic. What is needed is a programme that focuses on reforming and simplifying regulatory processes, and reducing bureaucratic hurdles. The emphasis should be on reducing the cost of compliance with the relevant laws and streamlining the taxation regime. In addition, providing tax incentives or exemptions to newly-formalised businesses, offering support and guidance on compliance procedures and implementing technology solutions to streamline administrative tasks should also be considered.

The importance of the SME sector for our economy cannot be overstated. Most SMEs have a lower degree of automation compared to larger businesses, which means that they are largely labour intensive enterprises. Facilitating their entry into the formal sector could be a key to expanding our perennially narrow tax base. Incentivising the entry of SMEs into the formal economy, therefore, must become an important part of the government's economic agenda going forward.

PAKISTAN'S INFLATION CHALLENGE

The real
challenge is
curbing the
menace
fast

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Tahmina Habib

Inflation, already a problem to be reckoned with, is steeply rising in Pakistan, causing citizens to struggle to afford essential items to provide basic meals for their families. The people of Pakistan have witnessed a cumulative increase in the overall price level since 2020-21 of over 79 percent. This has had a devastating effect on living standards, as incomes have not increased generally by the same extent, especially in the case of unskilled workers employed in the informal sector. High inflationary pressure on poor, low-income and even lower-middle-income families can only accentuate inequality in the medium term. This is worrying, because, not too long ago, the pandemic created new poor who are still fighting to come out of their economic distress. They are being pushed back further during this period of high prices. Unless tackled, this could fuel the existing social tensions due to limited and unequal opportunities, increased youth unemployment and high-level corruption among the powerful people.

What is inflation?

Inflation refers to a broad rise in the prices of goods

In its flagship World Economic Outlook 2024 report, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected that Pakistan's average inflation for this fiscal year may persist at 24.8%, approximately 1% higher than its forecast from four months ago. The menace of inflation has already inflicted profound hardships on the common people of Pakistan, and an uptick in it will hit the middle and lower middle classes of society hard due to multiple factors and Pakistan is trying to arrest it with the help of the IMF.

quickly prices are increasing over time. More simply, inflation measures how quickly money loses its purchasing power.

Explanation

While it is easy to measure the price changes of individual products over time, human needs extend beyond just one or two products. Individuals need a big and diversified set of products as well as a host of services for living a comfortable life. They include commodities like food grains, metals, fuel,



utilities like electricity and transportation, and services like healthcare, entertainment and labour. Inflation aims to measure the overall impact of price changes for a diversified set of products and services. It allows for a single value representation of the increase in the price level of goods and services in an economy over a specified time.

Note: A slowdown in inflation is called disinflation and a reduction in prices is called deflation.

Causes

Economic theory and practice, observed for many years and across many countries, shows that long-lasting periods of inflation are caused in large part by what's known as an easy monetary policy. In other words, when a country's central bank sets the interest rate too low or increases money growth too rapidly, inflation goes up.

Moreover, it can be caused by factors such as increased production costs or high demand for goods and services, and expectations for higher inflation can also contribute to rising prices. Besides, Pakistan's imports are far higher than its exports, leading to a trade deficit. Apart from that, Pakistan also has to pay a huge debt, which is roughly 75% of its net GDP growth. All these things have devalued the Pakistani currency, leading to inflation.

In addition, several natural factors have, over the years, disrupted the supply chain in Pakistan. Recent floods have destroyed many fields, leading to interruptions in the supply chain. Apart from that, outdated transport infrastructures in Pakistan slow down transportation and impact the supply chain, resulting in a shortage of goods and an increase in inflation.

An increase in the supply of money is the root of inflation, though this can play out through different mechanisms in the economy. A country's money supply can be increased by the monetary authorities by:

- Printing and giving away more money to citizens
- Legally devaluing (reducing the value of) the legal tender currency
- Lending new money into existence as reserve account credits through the banking system by purchasing government bonds from banks on the

secondary market (the most common method)

- Supply bottlenecks and shortages of key goods, causing other prices to rise.

In all of these cases, the money ends up losing its purchasing power. The mechanisms by which this drives inflation can be classified into three types: demand-pull inflation, cost-push inflation and built-in inflation.

How bad is the situation in Pakistan?

The spike in inflation has affected people from different socio-economic strata differently. Poor and low-income households are the worst victims of price hikes. They are struggling to deal with high food and fuel prices as their incomes have not increased to make up for the loss of their purchasing power. During the Covid pandemic, many lost their jobs due to shrinking economic activity. Once they returned to work, many had to compromise on their wages and salaries as most businesses had to recover from the pandemic-induced economic shocks. With high prices, the real income of salaried people and micro- and small businesses has shrunk. High inflation has reduced people's disposable income too.

High food inflation means food insecurity in poor and vulnerable households as they are forced to compromise on their diet. As it happens, food inflation is mostly higher than the average inflation. The daily price records of essentials indicate that prices of some essential commodities have increased by a much higher rate than the average inflation. High energy prices also raise food prices as food production costs go up through high fuel, fertiliser and transport costs. Therefore, high inflation comes with the menace of rising poverty and food insecurity. With limited income, poor families do not have any options to change their food and essential expenditures, since they

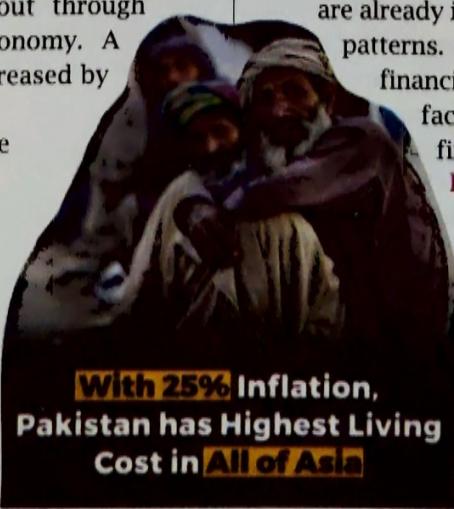
are already in the lowest category of consumption patterns. Additionally, they almost have no financial options, such as savings, loan facilities from banks or any other financial instruments.

Projections

Concerns about high inflation in Pakistan have been raised by several international financial institutions in recent weeks.

1. The IMF

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has increased the inflation projection to nearly 25% for this fiscal year. The IMF forecast



Inflation and its Types:

Definition:

› **Inflation:** A sustained increase in the general price level of goods and services in an economy over time.

Types of Inflation:

Demand-pull Inflation:

› Caused by an increase in aggregate demand exceeding aggregate supply.

› Common during periods of economic expansion.

Cost-push Inflation:

› Results from a decrease in aggregate supply due to rising production costs.

› Often associated with factors like increased wages or resource shortages.

Built-in Inflation:

› Arises from the self-perpetuating cycle of rising wages leading to higher production costs and, subsequently, higher prices.

Hyperinflation:

› An extremely high and typically accelerating inflation rate.

› Often caused by excessive money supply growth without a corresponding increase in goods and services.

Retail Inflation:

› Retail inflation, also known as **Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation**, is the rate at which the prices of goods and services that consumers buy for personal use increase over time.

› It measures the change in the cost of a basket of goods and services that are typically purchased by households, including food, clothing, housing, transportation, and medical care.

consumer price index (CPI) at 24.8% and 12.7% for the current and next fiscal year, respectively.

2. The World Bank

The World Bank expects inflation to remain elevated in FY24 due to higher domestic energy prices. "Consumer price inflation is projected to remain elevated at 26% in Fy24," read the report titled 'Pakistan Development Update: Fiscal Impact of Federal State-Owned Enterprises'. "The increase in prices is driven by domestic gas, electricity, and fuel tariff adjustments, resulting in a significant increase in domestic energy prices," it added.

However, inflation will gradually moderate in FY25-26 due to a high base effect and as global commodity prices ease.

3. The Asian Development Bank

According to a new Asian Development Bank (ADB) report, Pakistan has the highest living cost in all of Asia with a 25% inflation rate. The Manila-based lending agency's Asian Development Outlook stated that the inflation rate in Pakistan is expected to be 25% in the current fiscal year - the highest in all of Asia. This makes Pakistan the most expensive nation in Asia.

4. The United Nations

As per the report titled 'Economic and Social Survey of

Asia and the Pacific 2024: Boosting Affordable and Longer-term Financing for Governments', inflation rate in Pakistan is expected to hover at 26% and is projected to lower considerably to 12.2% in 2025. The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and federal government had set the inflation target at 21% for this fiscal year, but they are going to miss it despite inflicting huge losses in the shape of a 22% interest rate.

Implications for Pakistan

Economic and business experts stress the need for comprehensive measures to stabilize economy and alleviate inflationary pressures, provide relief to masses and create a conducive business environment.

The challenge for the new government

Inflation continues to be a major challenge for Pakistan's economy, affecting the market dynamics and lives of citizens and stirring significant concern among policymakers, businesses and the general populace. There is no doubt that the government, soon after assuming power, has embarked on an ambitious plan to bring about structural reforms to boost revenues and put the economy on a growth path, but the challenges still persist, necessitating continuity of policies and political stability. Amidst hopes of betterment after an agreement with the IMF and subsequent pouring in of foreign investment, the government hopes to put the economy on the right track and ease out common consumers.

How to curb inflation

To ensure sustainable economic growth, keeping inflation rate in check is a must. Here are some propositions that may be followed to keep inflation in check:

1. High interest rates

One way to tame inflation is to tighten monetary policy by increase interest rates. By raising interest rates, the central bank discourages people from taking loans because this could increase money circulation and subsequently decrease the inflation rate. However, the State Bank of Pakistan, in April, left its key policy rate unchanged at a record high of 22% for the seventh consecutive time. In its monetary policy statement on April 29, the SBP said, "The MPC [monetary policy committee] views that the level of inflation is still high. At the same time, global commodity prices appear to have bottomed out with resilient global growth. Recent geopolitical events have also added uncertainty about their outlook. Moreover, the upcoming budgetary measures may have implications for the near-term inflation outlook."

However, this is a contractionary policy with the key objective of controlling people's spending. Of course,



high lending rates pose some challenges. A high cost of borrowing increases the cost of production and reduces profitability, which may dampen private investment. Ordinary citizens who want to take out loans may also face challenges, and the amount of their loan repayment installments may be higher. In such a situation, the economy will stabilize at a lower level, and growth will be affected. But this is a temporary struggle. In times of high inflation, economic growth cannot be the objective of policymakers. Once inflation is controlled, the central bank can gradually reduce interest rates.

2. Reducing money supply

The other source of money supply is high borrowing by the government. The SBP data shows that the government's borrowing from commercial banks reached a record Rs5.5 trillion from July 1 to April 5, 2023-24. This is against Rs2.95bn in the same period last fiscal year. This massive borrowing is overburdening the economy, with the domestic debts not leaving space for revenue allocation other than interest payments. The government will have to pay more than half of the total budgetary outlay in interest payments.

3. Cutting government spending

The government can use fiscal policy tools, such as government spending and adjusting tax rates to manage inflation. For example, by reducing its spending, the government can reduce the overall demand in the economy, which can help lower inflation.

4. Improving tax structure

The tax structure in Pakistan is reliant more on indirect taxing, which is regressive in nature and disproportionately affects individuals with lower incomes compared to those with higher earnings. Besides, there is also a large sum of money in circulation, which is easy money. This is money that has not been earned by individuals or known sources, such as employees or businesses. Brokers, middlemen and rent-seekers in various sectors of the economy have accumulated a lot of money without being involved in any productive activities. They are also able to avoid paying taxes on their income. So, they must be brought into the tax net.

5. Price controls

Developing agricultural productivity can lower food prices and reduce inflation. Moreover, the government can implement price controls on certain goods and services to prevent prices from rising too rapidly. By enforcing stricter regulations on the pricing of essential commodities and tackling hoarding practices, the government can help prevent exploitative pricing and artificial shortages. This can help limit the impact of inflation on the cost of living. The government should also manage the exchange rate to control the prices of imported goods, which can influence price levels in the economy.

Conclusion

The persistently high inflationary pressure is here to stay for some time. Therefore, policymakers should adopt protection measures for the poor and low-income families against the perils of rising prices. These efforts may include policy formulation backed by empirical research, transparent and accountable governance to enforce regulations and collaborative initiatives by the public and private sectors, as well as modernizing industries by benefitting from technological advancements. Furthermore, a comprehensive and well-coordinated strategy, including domestic reforms and strategic international negotiations, could also pave the way for a more stable economic environment in the country. Social safety net programmes such as direct cash transfers and increasing availability of essential commodities at affordable prices for the poor and low-income groups are effective measures to provide a cushion to them on an immediate basis. □

The writer is a civil servant with a background in development studies. She has a strong interest in developmental issues, reflecting her dedication to improving societal conditions and contributing to economic development.

 In 2023, Pakistan was ranked 102nd out of 125 countries on the Global Hunger Index. The Index also suggested that Pakistan has a "serious" hunger level, which is certainly a matter of great concern. This food insecurity in a country that is claimed to be self-sufficient, or nearly self-sufficient, in all major staple food crops is an irony. But examining the situation closely, we come to know that food insecurity is a crisis that is created by a plethora of causes, ranging from policy inaction to wastage of resources, from poor farm productivity to climate change, and the list goes on. Understanding food insecurity in Pakistan is, thus, the key to comprehending the larger problems confronting the country, be it widespread poverty, abysmal economic growth or a worrying balance-of-payment crisis.

First, we look at what constitutes food security and what its possible dimensions are.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) defines food security as a situation "when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that can meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."

Pakistan's National Food Security Policy of 2018 enlists four dimensions of food security:

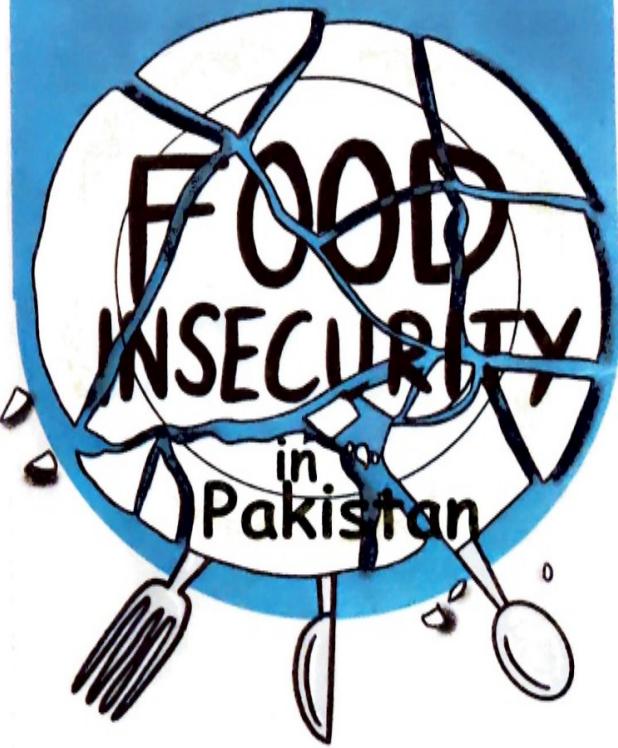
- (i) **Food availability:** It is sufficient quantity and appropriate quality of food. It is determined by household income, agricultural inputs, land and water resources, livestock, fisheries and the like.
- (ii) **Food accessibility:** It is the entitlement of an individual to adequate resources to access food.
- (iii) **Food utilization:** It is a state where clean drinking water, sanitation, healthcare and food are available in a state where an individual can meet all the physiological needs of his body.
- (iv) **Food stability:** It is the ability of individuals to access food uninterrupted despite suffering from sudden shocks such as political turmoil, climate change-driven disasters or some cyclic events such as seasonal food shortages.

These dimensions of food security indicate clearly that tackling the food crisis is a complex job, warranting a collaborative approach and demanding holistic policy planning and execution.

Now, we look at food and nutritional security levels in Pakistan.

The National Nutritional Survey 2018 reported an alarming situation. It revealed that 36.9% of households in the country were "food insecure" (worrying about how to get food), whereas 18.3% were suffering from "severe food insecurity" (those who experience

While delivering his maiden address to the nation after his party's success in the 2018 election, Imran Khan held a picture of a brain that showed signs of stunted growth. While explaining to the nation, he revealed that 40% of Pakistanis were unable to access sufficient, stable and affordable food. This situation was leading to wasting and stunting, he said, and both of these vices were undermining the very basis of Pakistan's economy: the labour force. He was dead right, as Pakistan is consistently ranked among the most food-insecure countries in the world.



hunger on a chronic level). Geographically, southwestern districts of Balochistan (bordering Iran and Afghanistan), ex-FATA regions, the southeastern part of Sindh, and some districts of AJK are the most food insecure.

The FAO also reported that Pakistan is lagging behind all lower-income countries when it comes to addressing challenges, undermining all four dimensions of food security. Worse still, stunting (low height-for-age) and wasting (low weight-for-age) are also some major



concerns. In Pakistan, nearly half of all children aged below five years have stunted growth. Similarly, one in every 10 children under five is suffering from wasting. Malnutrition, undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies of iron, calcium and vitamin A are also common. The per capita consumption of protein-rich, highly nutritious food, such as meat, milk, vegetables and fruit, is also six times lower than that in developed countries. These figures are perplexing. But the question is: when Pakistan is ranked 8th in producing wheat, 5th in sugar, 4th in milk and 10th in rice, why have we failed to ensure food availability, access, utilization and stability for millions of Pakistanis?

The answer to this burning question deserves a close examination.

As already discussed, access to food is one of the four dimensions of food security. In Pakistan, this access is severely restricted by limited incomes. The prevalence of poverty is one of the primary reasons for this. Almost 25% of Pakistanis live below the poverty line. Quite understandably, poverty does not let people have sufficient food, let alone wholesome and nutrient-rich food items. Worse still, economic shocks such as inflation have further added fuel to the fire. For instance, rural communities experienced a 50% increase in the prices of basic food items in comparison with 2022 and it significantly diminished the affordability of food items. This reduced capacity of rural communities to handle economic shocks and bear food-related expenditure has resulted in "considerably higher incidents of malnutrition, including wasting and stunting, among poorer quintiles of expenditure distribution," says a World Bank study. The situation is more or less the same for urban communities as well. Inflation, though abating in the recent weeks, is still the main cause of the deteriorating situation and can be termed a primary cause of poverty and, by extension, the



worsening food insecurity in Pakistan.

The second major driver of food insecurity is climate change. Notwithstanding all the technological advancements made in agriculture, food production systems are still dependent on weather and climatic conditions. Pakistan has been ranked the 5th most vulnerable country to climate change in the world, according to the Global Climate Risk Index. The vulnerability is driven primarily by disturbances in precipitation patterns, rising temperatures, consequent worsening heatwaves and the loss of productivity of certain staple crops. Pakistan has a dryland ecosystem, and the flora of this system usually have very low adaptive capacity; they cannot adapt to changing weather and climate. The same is true with Pakistan's staple crops, such as rice, vegetables, spices, wheat and other cereal crops. Wheat is one of the most important crops, contributing to 72% of Pakistan's daily caloric intake. This makes wheat the most critical crop to ensure food security in Pakistan.

Various studies show that wheat is under stress due to climate change. The Green Revolution, driven by the introduction of semi-dwarf varieties, improved irrigation and increased fertilizer intake, made Pakistan the first developing country in Asia to achieve self-sufficiency. But the country is no longer able to further enhance its yield. It has lost momentum, and the per-hectare yield of wheat has been

either stagnant or declining for the last many decades. Agri-scientists are of the view that changing precipitation patterns and shifting seasons are responsible for the poor performance of the wheat crop. Similarly, rice, which is now the second important crop when it comes to food security, is also under stress due to climate change. This crop is water-intensive, which makes it extremely vulnerable to changes in rainfall patterns and the availability of water from aquifers, and both of these sources of water are being impacted by changes in climate. It should be noted that climate change is not only reducing crop yield, but is also deteriorating the nutritional value of many crops, threatening nutritional security. For instance, a report by the Guardian shows that an increased level of atmospheric CO_2 causes a reduction in protein, iron and zinc levels in rice. In short, climate change has become a formidable threat to food security in Pakistan.

Besides erratic rainfall patterns and shifts in seasons, climate change-induced extreme weather events are also becoming serious threats to food security in

Pakistan. The 2022 flood is a worth-citing example here, as it devastated vast swathes of Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan. This flood wiped out standing crops on over 4.4 million acres, perished 0.8 million livestock and displaced over 33 million people. The economic losses amounted to over \$30 billion, per a World Bank estimate. Quite understandably, this widespread destruction of crops and livestock contributed significantly to food insecurity in Pakistan. Given the fact that Pakistan is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change, these events are set to strike us again and again, warranting adaptation and mitigation measures to ward off future threats to food security in Pakistan.

Import dependency is another factor responsible for food insecurity in Pakistan. Every year, Pakistan imports food items worth billions of dollars, e.g. pulses, oilseeds, nuts and even wheat. These food items constitute a major chunk of our dietary needs.



Together with various meat items, they provide almost 50% of our dietary energy. Unfortunately, largely due to policy neglect, these minor crops are given very little, if any, attention, putting our food and nutritional security at the mercy of the international market. For instance, during July–August FY2022–23, Pakistan spent \$4.17 billion on importing palm oil, soybean, pulses and wheat. Though various governments have announced initiatives to wean the country of this import dependency, especially of pulses and oilseeds, a sheer lack of implementation, poor market access, the absence of proper harvesting and threshing machinery and consequent post-harvest losses have always deterred farmers from growing these minor crops. Here, it should be noted that minor crops also suffer great price fluctuations in the market, unlike major crops that show some stability. This price volatility further discourages the local markets from evolving a proper market mechanism. All these

factors lead to a situation where Pakistanis are deprived of an important source of high-protein and nutritious food, causing food insecurity among poorer segments of society.

Livestock products, particularly beef, mutton, poultry and milk and other dairy products, can significantly contribute to food security in Pakistan. But here again, policy neglect has hampered this sector severely. Despite contributing 61.89% to value addition in agriculture and 13% to GDP (Pakistan Economic Survey 2021–22), livestock is not getting any state patronage. This potential of the livestock sector to contribute to national food security is marred by various problems such as lack of innovation, poor R&D (resulting in declining meat and milk production of breeds), unregulated market access, disruption in the supply chain (due to a lack of storage and refrigerated and frozen transportation infrastructure) and the prevalence of livestock disease. These factors have led to

inadequate commercialization and we have failed to exploit the untapped potential of livestock. This subsector of agriculture needs urgent attention because it can play a critical role in ensuring food security as it is less affected by climate change and can be made climate-resilient quite easily. Similar to livestock, the fisheries subsector, which can provide affordable and nutrition-rich white meat, is also a neglected sector. The development of this sector can reduce demand for other protein sources such as beef, mutton and poultry, allowing people to diversify their food baskets and improving nutritional food security. Pakistan is endowed with immense inland water resources as well as a 290,000 square kilometre Exclusive Economic Zone that can be exploited for fishing. But lack of government support such as credit facilities (the fisheries subsector was disbursed with PKR 9.6 billion in 2021–22 which was 2% of total credit available for the agriculture sector as per the State

Bank of Pakistan) is holding back this sector from unleashing its production potential. Various studies show that fisheries can provide a minimum of 1 million tonnes of fish alone in the marine sector. If we add the potential of inland fisheries or aquaculture, it would be even more. However, actual production was recorded at 696 thousand metric tonnes including both marine and inland fish production. This sorry state of affairs needs to be addressed, otherwise, we are depriving ourselves of a high-nutrition food source that can go a long way in meeting our food and nutrition security needs.

Land degradation is also proving to be a major headache for policymakers. Though extensive irrigation projects in the post-Indus Waters Treaty helped Pakistan bring millions of fertile agricultural land under cultivation, experiencing a 65% increase in area under cultivation, this extension is no longer

address this problem. To address constraints hindering food availability, state resources must be diverted from climate-vulnerable traditional agriculture to climate-smart, innovative and adaptive agricultural practices. The promotion of various precision agriculture practices such as the use of drones, big data, AI/machine learning and cloud computing, as well as bio-fortified and drought-resistant crops, should be given top priority. The provision of cold storage and the development of farm machinery specifically designed for each crop can lead to avoiding post-harvest losses.

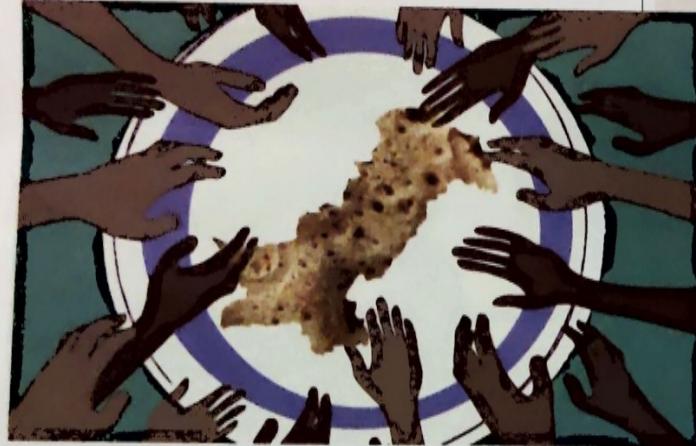
Strengthening social security schemes like BISP can play a key role in ensuring food accessibility. Though the government runs an extensive nationwide network for providing subsidized food items through Utility Stores, these schemes have very poor penetration levels. For instance, only 1.8% of the population in

Punjab and 0.3% of the population in KP benefit from these programs. Both federal and provincial governments should focus on improving livelihoods through credit facilities for underfunded subsectors such as fisheries and livestock. Managing inflation through administrative and fiscal measures, bringing politico-economic stability and developing a resilient food supply chain are also some steps that need to be taken on a war footing.

There is no denying that Pakistan is experiencing a poly-crisis situation where a host of crises are interacting, entangling and mutually reinforcing one another. One such crisis is food insecurity, which is impacting Pakistan's economy deeply.

Besides economic and political imperatives, Article 38 of the Constitution of Pakistan obliges the government, both at the federal and provincial levels, to provide basic necessities to the public, including food. Therefore, there is an urgent need to restructure our food production system, making it more diversified and climate change-resilient. Moreover, liberal allocation of resources to R&D for all subsectors of agriculture—crops, minor crops, livestock, poultry and fisheries—should be undertaken so that we can change consumption patterns and enable people to enhance their food as well as nutritional security level. We cannot afford a business-as-usual approach; the gravity of the situation demands an urgent response from the government. The sooner we realize, the better it is for our national economic, political and social development. □

The writer is a graduate of the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad. He writes on national and international affairs

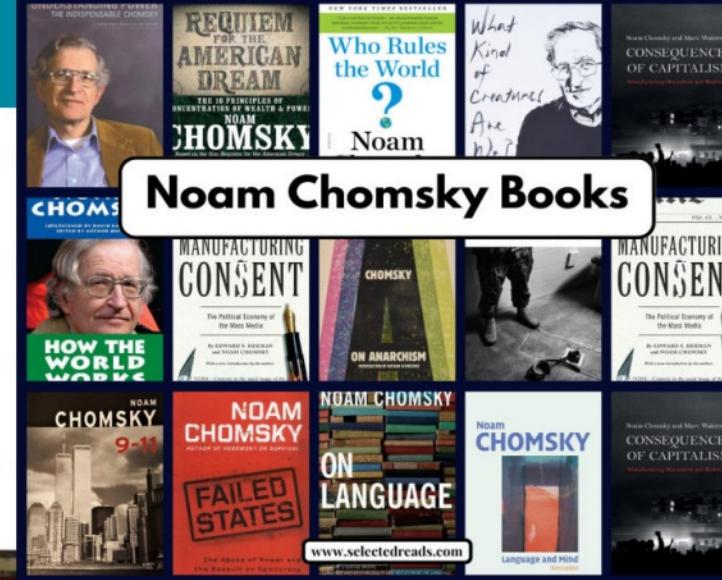
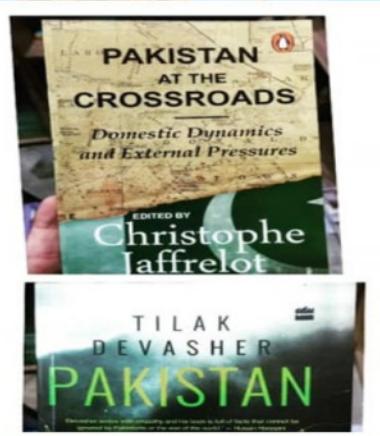
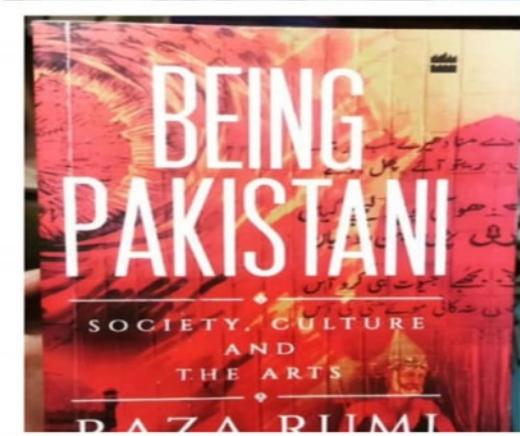
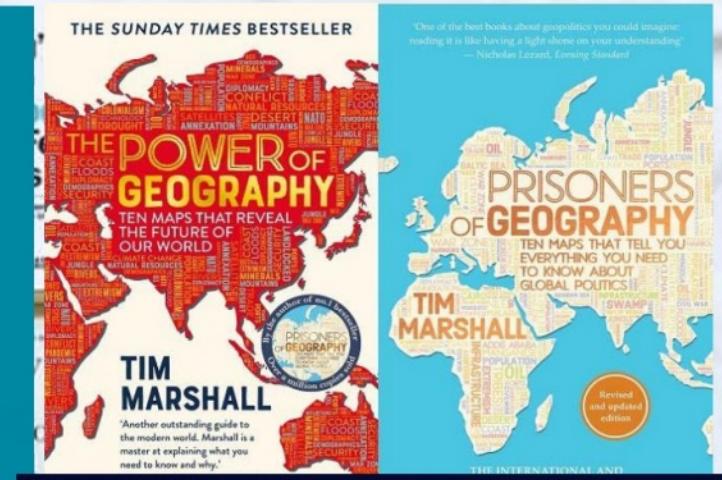
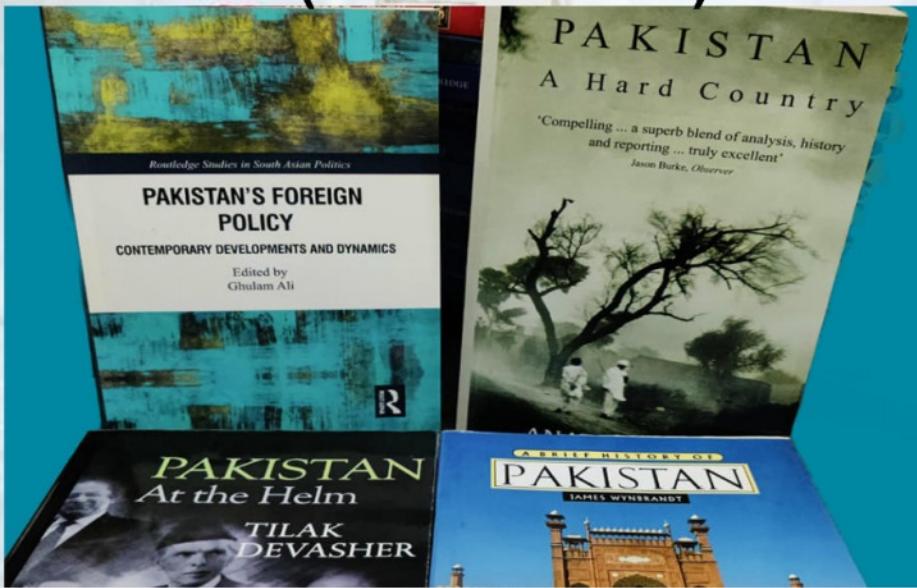


feasible now. The Indus Basin is now undergoing a crisis. Reports by WAPDA show that water logging and salinity are affecting 11 and 5 million acres, respectively, depriving agri-communities of fertile soil for food production. Similarly, water and wind erosion are also degrading large swatches of the Indus Basin. All this leads to the deteriorating productivity of agriculture and consequently causes food insecurity.

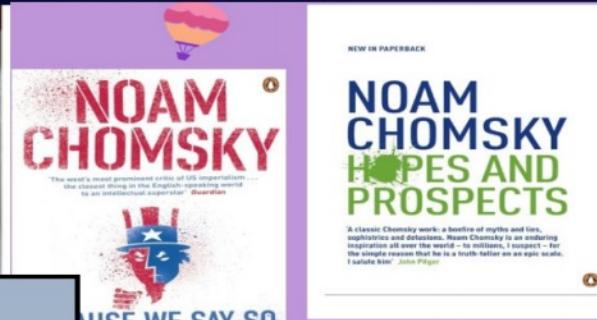
Food insecurity is an unfolding crisis that is causing staggering economic and social costs. A report by the UN's World Food Program noted that Pakistan suffers from \$7.5 billion every year due to under-5 malnutrition. The gravity of the problem deserves urgent attention. The government needs to accord the same priority to this issue as it does to macroeconomic instability. To ensure food insecurity, the state must evolve a strategy to address all pillars of food security. Addressing only farm productivity and ignoring food accessibility, utilization and stability cannot help us

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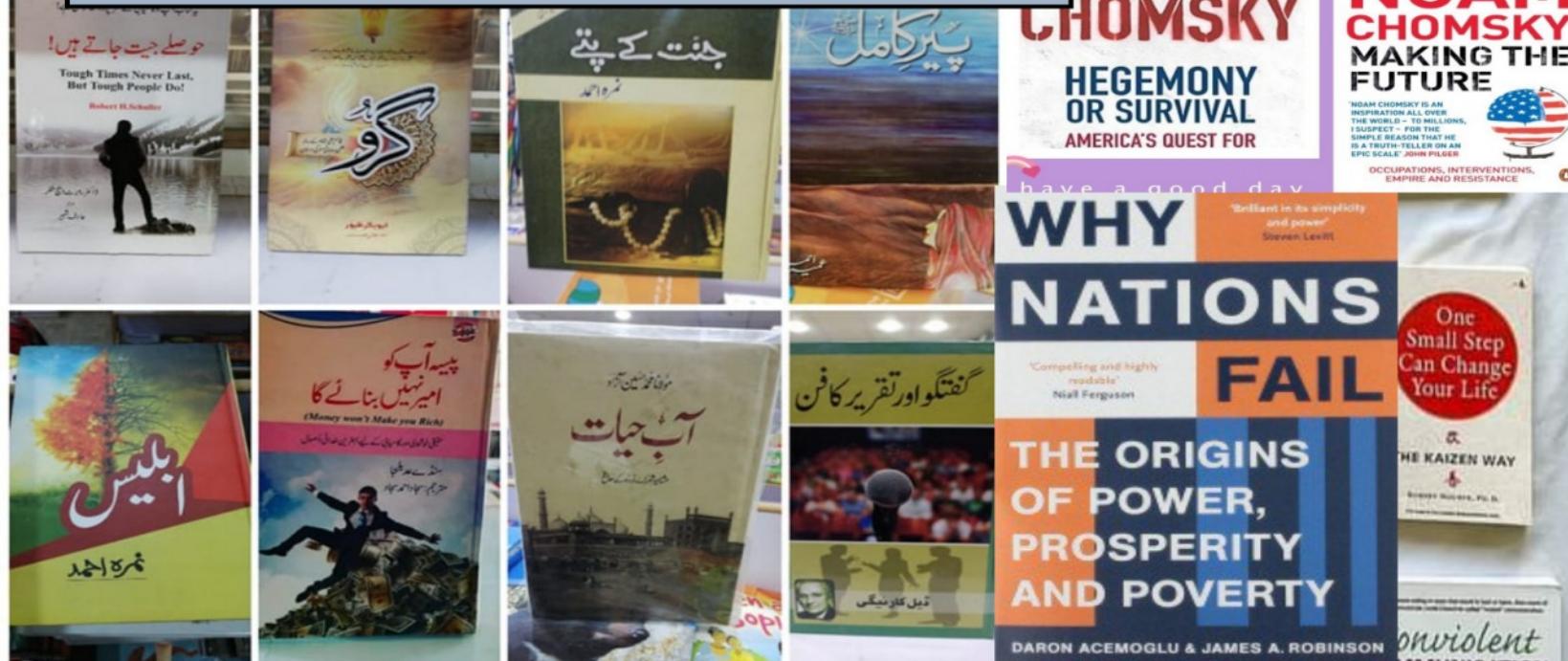
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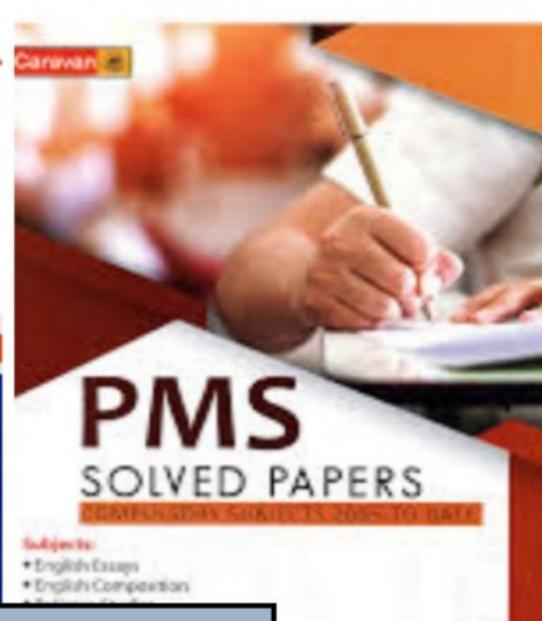
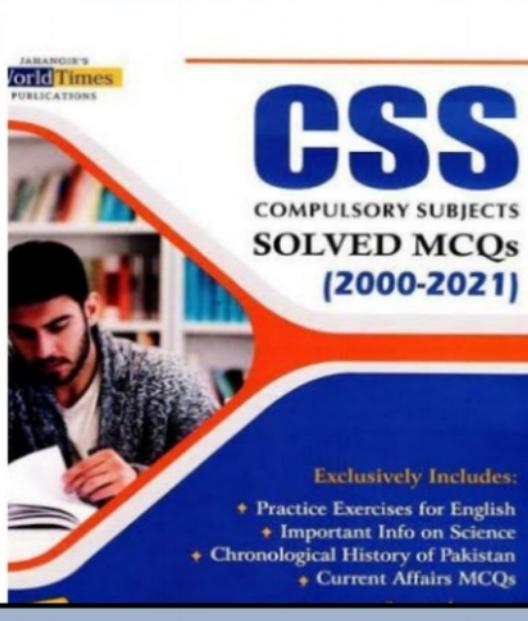
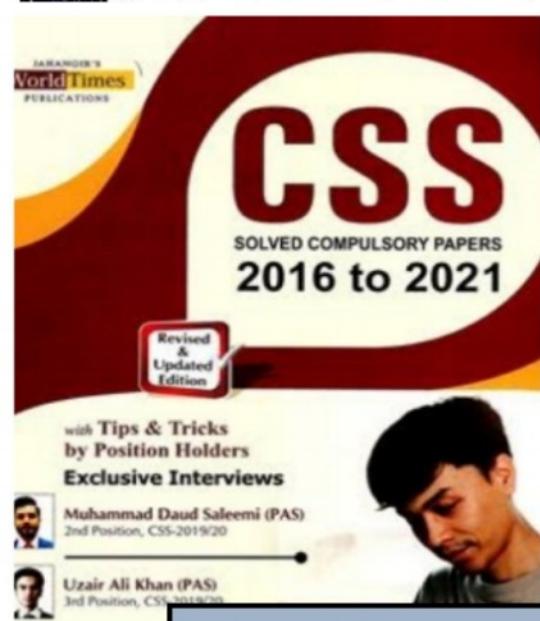


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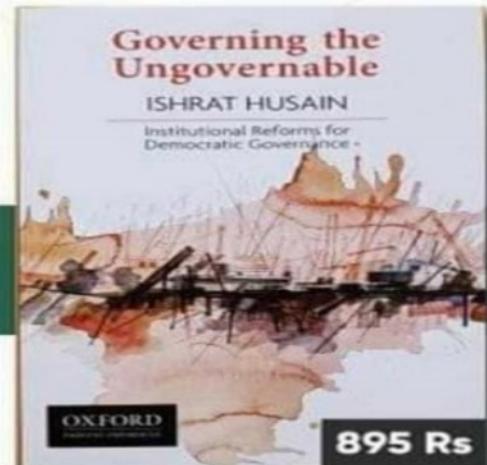
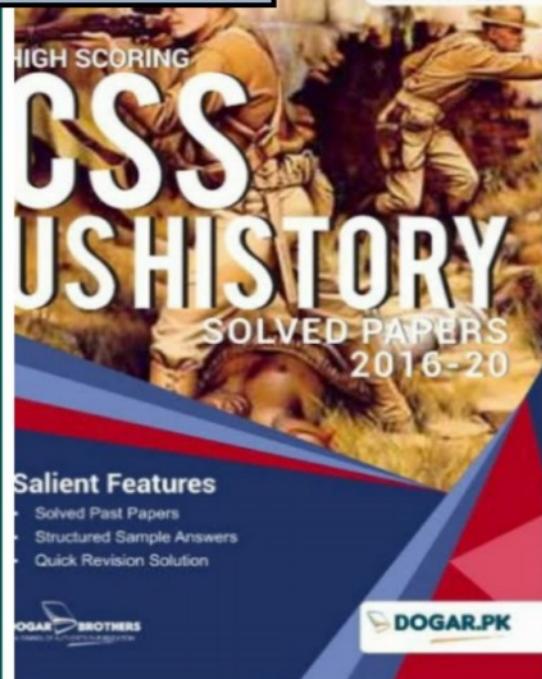
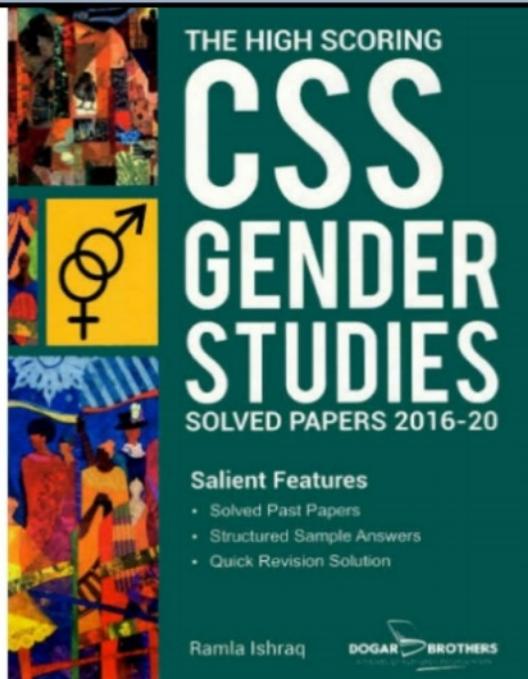
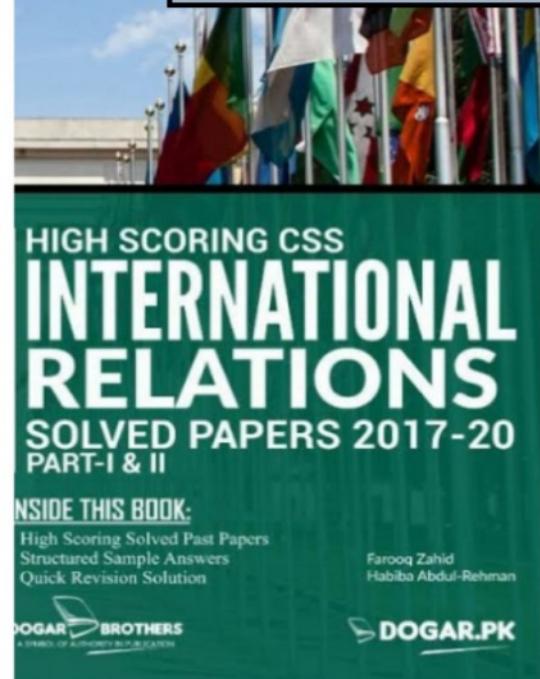




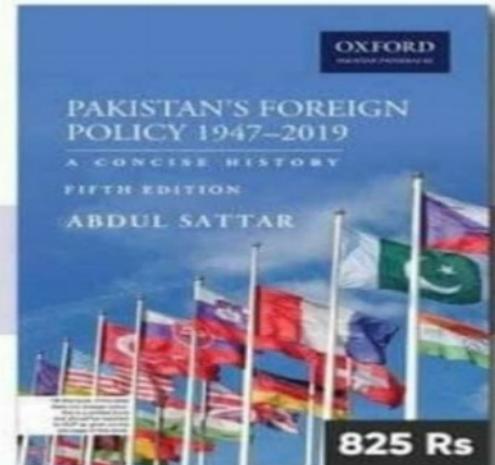
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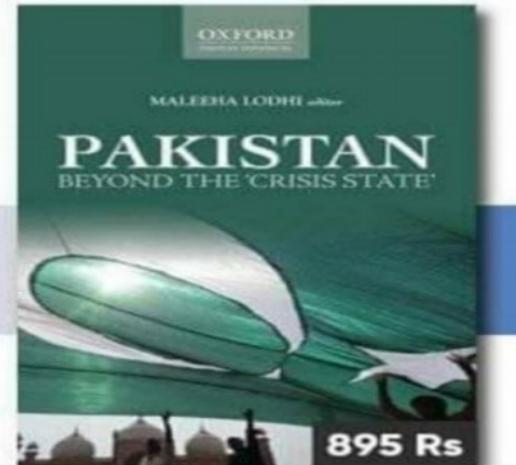
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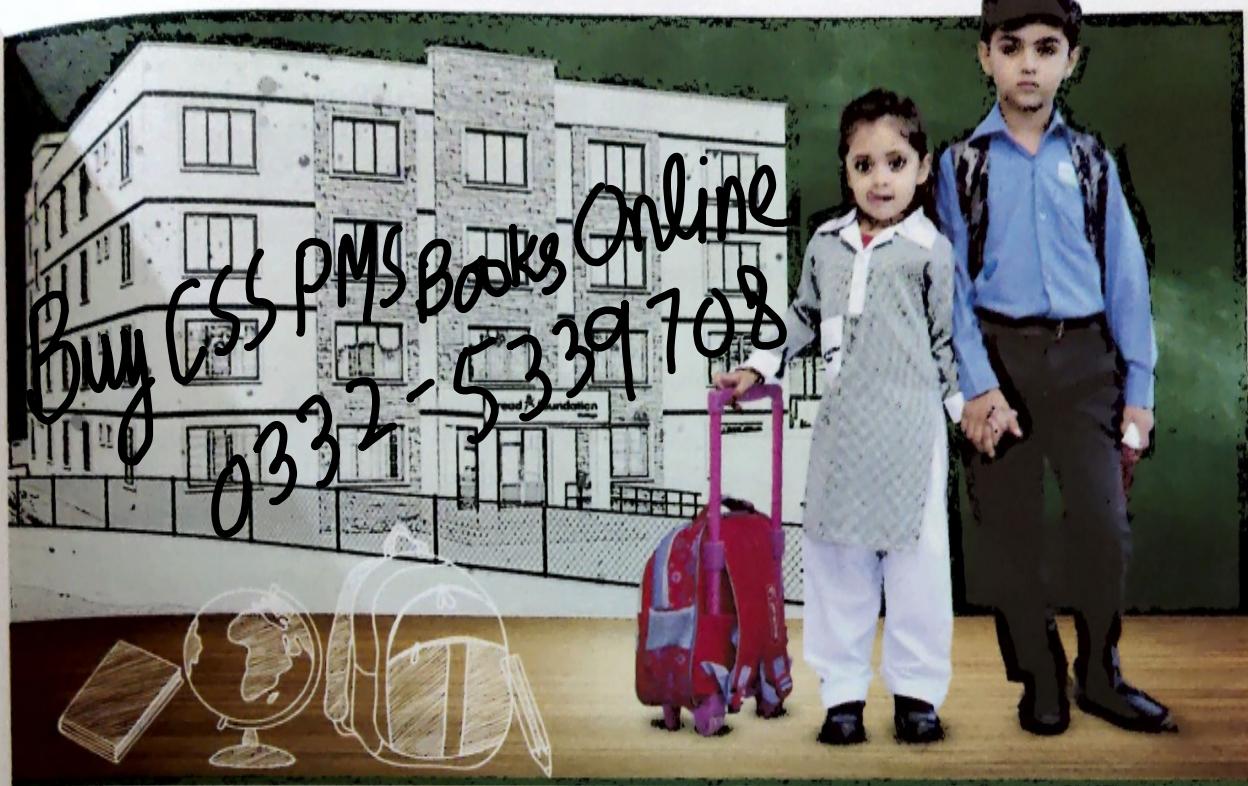
Governing The Ungovernable



Pakistan's Foreign Policy 1947-2019



Pakistan Beyond The Crisis State



There is no denying that education is the building block of social progress and economic development in a country. In this era of knowledge-based systems, it is the key to unlocking the human mind's potential and opening new horizons to advancements in various fields of national endeavour. Sadly, the education sector in Pakistan has fallen by the wayside due to a never-ending neglect on the part of state authorities. Successive governments have assigned it low priority, as expenditure on education as a whole, including federal spending, was only 1.7 percent of the GDP in 2021-22. This has led us to a situation where a significant number of children are out of school, besides many other pressing issues faced in the education sector.

Introduction

Humans' ability to learn is one of the features that distinguish them from other species. At the same time, the nations that are advanced in education are leading the world. No one can deny the importance of education in every aspect of life. Education is a tool for changing the patterns of thought in individuals and nations. It occupies top priority in the social sector of developing nations, including Pakistan. Historically, due to many challenges and issues faced by the education sector, it has not delivered the expected outcomes in the country. So far, education has remained a neglected sector, but now the importance of education in transforming the fate of

EDUCATION EMERGENCY IN PAKISTAN

Act now to save the future

Dr. M. Usmani

Pakistan is facing a serious crisis in the realm of education as the country has the second-highest population of out-of-school children in the world, at 26.2 million (representing 39 percent of the school-age population), according to Unicef Pakistan. It is despite the fact that there is a growing recognition in the country that education is essential for every child. Moreover, it is a basic right of all five- to 16-year-olds in the country to be provided "free and compulsory" education by the state under Article 25-A of the Constitution. To tackle this gigantic crisis, the federal government has declared an 'Education Emergency' across Pakistan for four years. The step aims to bring back the out-of-school children into the education system and prevent further disparity in educational opportunities.

nations has been realized and therefore, many efforts and resources are vested in the social sector, especially to put education on modern lines by introducing blended learning and modern technologies. One such effort is the declaration of an "Education Emergency" across Pakistan. Announcing the emergency at the National Conference on Education Emergency, on May 8, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the government wanted to promote literacy to help the country regain its lost space and develop itself as one of the most educated societies in the world. "With strong conviction and with the support of provinces, the government will handle the challenge of enrolling 26 million out-of-school children (OOSC) and they will be brought back to schools," he said.

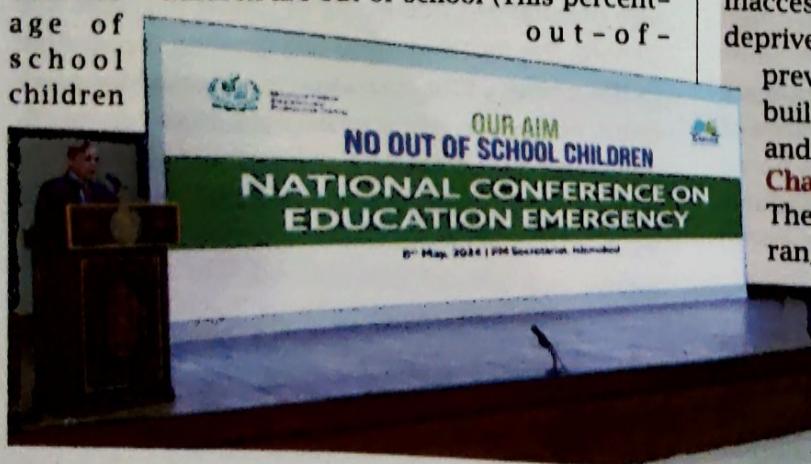
He said that he would personally supervise the programme and meet all the chief ministers, setting aside political affiliations, with a vision to march in unison, expressing the hope that the provinces too would extend their support. "This is a very challenging task, but it concerns our children and country's future," he maintained.

The current state of the education sector

Article 25-A of the Constitution of Pakistan guarantees that "free and compulsory" education will be provided to children between the ages of five and 16 years, but still education in Pakistan is neither yet compulsory nor free. Moreover, under the eighth UN Millennium Development Goal (MDG), among other targets, Pakistan was committed to providing universal primary education to all by 2015. But, unfortunately, we have failed to fulfil our promises and commitments. With the lowest literacy rate in South Asia (the officially claimed literacy figure is 62 percent) after Afghanistan, Pakistan has as many as 26.2 million out-of-school children and over 70 percent of children of age 10 cannot read or understand text.

Problems

As per Unicef reports, an estimated 26 million Pakistani children are out of school (This percentage out of -



is one of the highest in the world) and 70 percent of 10-year-olds are unable to comprehend even basic texts, while the officially claimed literacy figure is 62 percent. Included in this statistic are individuals who can only sign their names, but are unable to read or write.

Moreover, the UNDP's Global Human Development Report of 2022-23 degraded Pakistan from a medium to a low level of human development, thus vividly highlighting the failure of the educational system of the country.

Pakistan Education Statistics, in its recent report for 2021-22, has pointed out that there were 26.21 million OOSC in the country. The report stated that 39 percent children in Pakistan were out of school - 11.73 million in Punjab, 7.63m in Sindh, 3.63m in KP, 3.13m in Balochistan and 0.08 million in Islamabad.

Likewise, the government's dismal spending of 1.7 of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the education sector is a matter of concern. Similarly, disparity in the availability of essential facilities such as toilets, potable water and boundary walls in schools in different parts of the country is also a matter of concern. A large number of schools across the country, particularly in the peripheries, are without potable water and other basic facilities.

A large number of public sector schools, especially in small towns and rural areas, lack basic facilities such as toilets, drinking water, electricity to run fans necessary during the summer months, and boundary walls, all of which serve as a disincentive for even enrolled pupils to attend classes.

Many primary schools have only two teachers for all classes, making it impossible for them to give attention to each student, leading to poor learning outcomes. If that is not bad enough, there is the phenomenon of 'ghost' schools - they exist only on paper - and also ghost teachers who regularly draw salaries without setting foot in any school.

Inaccessibility to proper primary schools not only deprives young people of basic education but also prevents them from pursuing higher studies to build on their abilities for leading a productive life and making contributions to economic growth.

Challenges

The educational crisis in Pakistan encompasses a range of challenges that hinder the development and progress of the education sector. Some key aspects of this crisis include:

a. Low Literacy Rates

Pakistan continues to grapple with low literacy rates, particularly among marginalized communities and rural areas.

According to UNESCO, Pakistan's literacy rate stands at around 59%, with significant disparities between urban and rural areas and between genders.

b. Quality of Education

The quality of education remains a pressing issue, with many schools lacking basic infrastructure, trained teachers and quality learning materials. Poor teaching standards, outdated curriculum and inadequate facilities contribute to low learning outcomes and a lack of preparedness among students for the challenges of the modern world.

c. Access to Education

While efforts have been made to improve access to education, significant barriers persist, particularly for girls, children with disabilities and those from marginalized communities. Factors such as poverty, distance to schools, cultural norms and security concerns limit access to education for many children.

d. Gender Disparities

Gender disparities in education remain a significant concern in Pakistan. Girls' enrollment rates are lower than boys', and dropout rates are higher, particularly at the secondary level. Early marriage, cultural norms, lack of female teachers and insecurity are among the factors contributing to these disparities.

e. Infrastructure and Facilities

Many schools in Pakistan lack basic infrastructure and facilities, such as classrooms, electricity, clean water, and sanitation facilities. This affects the learning environment and overall educational experience for students, particularly in rural and remote areas.

f. Teacher Shortage and Quality

Pakistan faces a shortage of qualified and trained teachers, particularly in rural areas. Teacher absenteeism, low motivation and inadequate training contribute to the overall quality of education. Additionally, the profession of teaching often lacks prestige and adequate compensation, further exacerbating the teacher shortage.

g. Curriculum Reforms

The curriculum in Pakistan has faced criticism for being outdated, rote-based and lacking relevance to the needs of a modern society. Efforts to reform the curriculum to make it more inclusive, relevant and aligned with global standards are necessary to prepare



students for the challenges of the 21st century.

Way forward

There is no doubt that if Pakistan is to progress beyond low middle-income status and low level of human development, it will have to attach top priority to creating more human capital by ensuring that all children go to school and acquire knowledge and skills thereafter for a faster increase in labour productivity in the country.

The promulgation of the Education Emergency should lead to major decisions for a faster expansion of school education in the country. A five-year plan ought to be put together by the Planning Commission and the Provincial Planning and Development Departments, with the target of bringing down the incidence of out-of-school children from almost one-third currently to one-fourth by 2029.

The issue of immediate importance is raising the level of education expenditure by the provinces, which is

hardly 1.7 percent of the GDP. The policy adopted by India of the levy of an Education Cess on the income tax may be considered in the forthcoming Federal Budget. This cess is 3 percent of the total taxable amount. It has helped raise public education spending in India to 4 percent of the GDP. Revenue from the Education Cess may be fully transferred into the Divisible Pool for sharing with the provincial governments. This will convey a signal of strong action after the promulgation of the Emergency.

Conclusion

Pakistan's education crisis is both deep-rooted and widespread. The authorities must prepare a solid plan of action, if they truly aim to tackle this beast. With a strategic, well-funded and inclusive approach, it is possible to transform the educational landscape of Pakistan. It is hoped that the education authorities deliver an actionable plan that will stand the test of time and political change. For once, let this not be a missed opportunity.

The writer is a Lahore-based academician and political analyst.

A Letter to Unallocated/Unqualified CSS Aspirants

I hope this letter finds you in good spirits, despite the recent setback you've encountered. I use this opportunity to extend my commiserations as well as a heartfelt encouragement to all those who couldn't make it this time. I know the agony and pain that this result has brought to you. I am also aware that most of you would be thinking now that this marks an end to your dream of becoming a CSP officer. But you need not fall into dejection; be more optimistic, as it's not the end of the world; it's just a setback and setbacks are not the end of the road but rather detours on the path to success.

Robin Sharma says, "The beautiful thing about setbacks is they introduce us to our strengths." Your recent setback may feel disheartening, but it's important to recognize that it is not a reflection of your worth or potential. It's a stepping stone on the journey towards self-actualization and realization of goals. In the words of Winston Churchill, "Success is not final, failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts." So, you just need to keep in mind that champions create chances; they fall, but they rise, and that too with style. Use this experience to propel you forward, stronger and more resilient than ever before. As a famous Japanese proverb "Nana korobi, ya oki" (Fall down seven times, stand up eight) goes, you should never give up hope, and always strive for more. It means that your focus shouldn't be on the reality in front of you but on a greater vision that may not be a reality yet.

Most of you will have one or two more chances to take this exam. And, if you do, you are still there. So, before getting upset, dejected and frustrated, just stop and cerebrate: Are you satisfied with your preparation for the previous attempt? If you find the answer in the affirmative, you need to introspect and know that you must increase the scale of your efforts a bit to make your next attempt successful. Take this opportunity to reflect on the lessons you've learned, the strengths you've discovered, and the areas where you can improve. As you move forward, keep in mind the words of Theodore Roosevelt: "Believe you can and you're halfway there." Believe in yourself, believe in your abilities, and believe in your capacity to overcome any obstacle that stands in your way. And, if this was your last chance, explore other options to go for in future. Ending up non-qualified or non-allocated after the CSS exam doesn't mean that you have failed. During the course of preparation for this exam, you have gained a wealth of knowledge, and hopefully confidence, that will be valued in any profession you choose. You have become a jack of all trades after learning diverse subjects like Science, International Relations, Economics, Politics, and many more. You have developed good reading, writing and speaking skills and that is why you reached the final stage of the exam. You couldn't get through this exam, but you have qualified for all the knowledge and aptitude parameters that can make you an asset to the country, and that has equipped you with all the skills you need to make a positive impact on our society.

Socrates once said that an unexamined life is not worth living. So get to know yourself well and the best time to do so is during these tough hours. Don't let your personality remain unexamined. Remember your role models, parents and teachers. Nobody would want to see you low. If you want to give yourself two years, go ahead. But don't leave yourself unexamined. You will gradually realise that every step in your life, even your non-qualification or non-allocation in CSS, has gotten you closer to success and closer to your true purpose in life. Remember that the minimum distance between failure and success can only be observed by God or by your inner self. So emerge again, evolve in between; you are nearing a goal that will eventually value your knowledge and hard work. In closing, I want to remind you of the words of Harriet Beecher Stowe: "When you get into a tight place and everything goes against you, till it seems as though you could not hang on a minute longer, never give up then, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn." Keep pushing forward, keep striving for excellence and never lose sight of the extraordinary potential that lies within you.

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With warmest regards,
Adeel Niaz
Editor Jahangir's World Times
Project Head World Times Institute

- INTERVIEW -

“I joined WTI for mock exams and interview preparation. The sessions were well-organised. Syndicate activities were a source of great learning and socialization.”

In Conversation with
SHAHER BANO RAI (PAS)
2nd in Pakistan;
CSS 2023-24



JWT Edit. Board

Jahangir's World Times (JWT): First of all, please tell us about your educational background.

Shaher Bano Rai (SBR): I did my schooling from Jaranwala and FSC (Premedical) from Faisalabad. Then, I completed my MBBS from KEMU, Lahore, in 2022.

JWT: As you have been allocated to Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS), what was the most attractive feature of this service for you?

SBR: Pakistan Administrative Service allows for a diverse work experience in different parts of the country. Besides, this service provides greater vertical mobility as well as opportunities for personal growth and grooming.

JWT: How was your experience at the World Times Institute?

SBR: I took mock exams with WTI before CSS 2023 written exam. They were very well organized and the question papers were very close to those in real exam. Moreover, the evaluation of our papers was also up to the mark. Moreover, I joined WTI for interview preparation as well. The sessions were well-organized. Syndicate activities were a source of great learning and socialization.

JWT: What was the significance of newspaper reading in your preparation? How did staying

updated with current affairs shape your success?

SBR: Newspaper reading helped me a lot in current affairs and adding statistical references for Essay, Pakistan Affairs and other subjects. I would gather useful information from the newspaper and jot it down in my notes register under the concerned category. Staying updated with current affairs was my key to cracking the CSS 2023 exams.

JWT: What was your overall strategy for cracking the CSS exam?

SBR: Patience, perseverance, hard work and faith. I believe believing in yourself, putting in your best and then leaving everything unto Allah does wonders.

JWT: What was your approach to time management throughout the preparation process? How did you balance multiple subjects and cover the vast syllabus?

SBR: Time management is very important. Students should realise that all papers carry equal marks. And, thus, one subject should not compromise the other. For better time management: make a schedule, allocate time to all subjects based upon their syllabi and evaluation of your strengths, try to cover 70-80% of that subject in the allotted time and then move on to the

Detailed Marks Sheet

Subject	Marks
Compulsory Subjects	
Essay	40
English Précis & Composition	56
GSA	68
Current Affairs	62
Pakistan Affairs	55
Islamiyat	59
Optional Subjects	
Political Science	110
Governance and Public Policies	86
Punjabi	83
Criminology	60
Gender Studies	85
Total Written	
Viva Voce	160
Grand Total	
	924

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next. A good cumulative score in written is the outcome of a good score in all subjects.

JWT: What, in your opinion, is the key to making a difference in the written part of the CSS exam?

SBR: Good presentation is the first thing to make the examiner read your paper. Your handwriting should be legible. Add flowcharts, diagrams, headings to your questions. Dedicate equal time to all questions.

JWT: How should one write answers to get maximum marks?

SBR: Answers should be presentable. The easier you make it for the examiner to understand your paper, the higher you'll score. So, divide time for subjective part. Attempt each question in the allotted time. Don't write one answer on 10 pages and the next one on 5! Keep it balanced according to your writing speed. Use flowcharts, maps, diagrams, where necessary.

Maintaining a balance between analysis and presentation is required.

JWT: How did you structure your Essay and what was your strategy for Précis and Composition Paper?

SBR: I structured my essay in the following way:

- Started with a thesis statement that was comprehensive and generic.
- Made an outline of the essay stating ideas in complete sentences along with references.
- Wrote a catchy and well-thought out introduction. Didn't drag my essay unnecessarily. Concluded on a comprehensive note.
- Flowcharts, diagrams, headings etc. should not be made a part of the essay.

For Précis Paper, I attempted précis

My tips on:

Selection of optional subjects

Consider 4 things:

1. Your own interest;
2. Scoring trend;
3. Syllabus of the subject; and
4. Time you have at hand.

Notes-making

Your handwritten notes will be the go-to thing to revise everything in the end. Make notes of whatever you want to remember. Organise notes and keep them handy. Practice outlines, diagrams, maps on notes.

Revision

Revise according to available time. Some facts and figures need more rigorous revision so keep shortlisting of what you want to revise.



question first – did it on a rough page before writing the final piece. Then solved the comprehension question, followed by sentence correction, idioms, and prepositions, and the translation, in the end.

JWT: What areas should the new aspirants focus while preparing for the CSS exam?

SBR: Recognise your weaknesses and work on them. Build good foundation of knowledge for compulsory subjects. Make a habit of reading newspapers and jotting down information. ☐

My Interview Experience
The interview panel was really accommodating and generally nice. It was a pleasant experience overall.

Rapid Fire

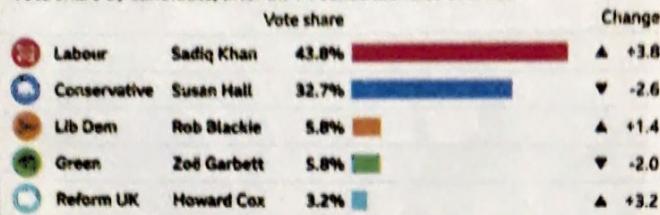
Your inspiration	More of a personal choice
Attempts	01
Qualification	MBBS
Alma mater	King Edward Medical University, Lahore
Schooling medium	English
Your study schedule	6-8 hours daily for 6-7 months (Focused study)
Your sources	Relied mostly upon self-made notes
Academy or Institute you joined	World Times Institute (for mock exam and interview preparation)
Group preferences	1. PAS 2. PSP 3. PCS 4. FSP 5. MLCG 6. IRS 7. PAAS
Why PAS?	Diversity of roles and far-reaching impacts
Hobbies	Debating, cycling, baking, reading and reciting Urdu poetry
Fave personality(ies)	Noam Chomsky and Arundhati Roy
Fave book	Nuskha Haye Wafa by Faiz Ahmad Faiz
Fave quote	"To love. To be loved. To never forget your own insignificance. To never get used to the unspeakable violence and the vulgar disparity of life around you. To seek joy in the saddest places. To pursue beauty to its lair. To never simplify what is complicated or complicate what is simple. To respect strength, never power. Above all, to watch. To try and understand. To never look away. And never, never to forget." — Arundhati Roy
Secret of your success	Perseverance, patience, hard work, passion and faith
Your role model	Imam Ali (AS)

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Usman Ahmad

Sadiq Khan re-elected London Mayor

Vote share by candidate, after all 14 constituencies counted



Sadiq Khan, who has gained huge global renown since his emergence on the political scene of the United Kingdom, has once again made history by becoming the first politician to be elected as the Mayor of London for a third consecutive term. Khan, who made history in 2016 by becoming the first Muslim mayor of London, secured a massive 10,88,225 votes with a 43.8 percent vote share, well ahead of Conservative candidate Susan Hall's 8,11,518 votes. The 53-year-old Labour Party politician – a former human rights lawyer brought up in a London public housing complex – now overtakes his predecessor, Boris Johnson, as the longest-serving holder of the post.

Family background

Khan rose from humble roots to spar with world leaders and bring consequential change to the British capital. He was born in London to Pakistani immigrant parents. His father worked as a bus driver and his mother was a seamstress.

He grew up in public housing in Tooting, an ethnically mixed residential area in south London, and slept in a bunk-bed until he was 24. He is a handy boxer, having learned the sport to defend himself in the streets against those who hurled racist abuse at him, and two of his brothers are boxing coaches.

Education

Khan completed his school education in state schools. He initially wanted to become a dentist, but a teacher spotted his gift for verbal sparring and directed him toward law. He gained a law degree from the University of North London and started out as a trainee lawyer in 1994 at the Christian Fisher legal firm, where he was eventually made a partner. He specialized in human rights, and spent three years chairing the civil liberties campaign group Liberty.

Political career

Khan joined Labour at age 15 when Conservative prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, was in her pomp. He became a local councillor for Tooting in the Conservative-dominated Wandsworth local borough in 1994, and its member of parliament in 2005. He still lives in the area with his lawyer wife, Saadiya Ahmed (also a solicitor), and their two teenage daughters.

Gordon Brown made him communities minister in 2008 and he later served as transport minister – Initially, it was believed within the party that a more senior leader should be picked for the mayoral contest. Khan was seen as a surprise pick – becoming the first Muslim minister to attend Cabinet meetings. He gained ministerial experience before later quitting in 2016 to run for London mayor. Such a career path has already been trodden by a former prime minister.

Mayor of London

Khan's tenure as mayor has been marked by a focus on addressing issues such as housing affordability, transportation, air quality and social integration within the diverse communities of London. Khan's tenure has been characterized by a commitment to addressing the challenges facing the city and improving the quality of life for its residents. He has advocated for progressive policies aimed at promoting and opportunity for all Londoners, while also tackling pressing issues such as housing affordability, transportation, crime and the environment.

Conclusion

Khan is London's third mayor after Ken Livingstone (2000–2008) and Boris Johnson (2008–2016), and there is widespread speculation he could eventually try to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor and become prime minister of the United Kingdom. ■

The writer is a member of staff.





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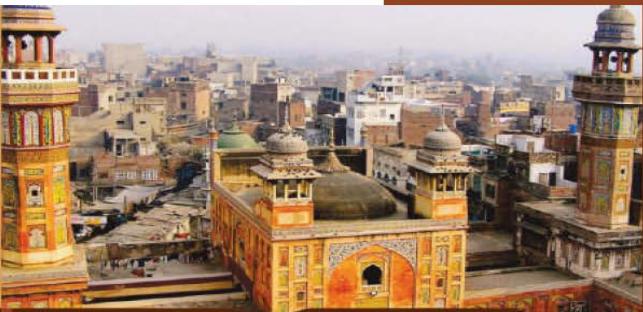
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GENERAL

Nuclear weapons are indiscriminate and even some modern so-called "small" or "tactical" weapons are more powerful than the bombs dropped at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Their use would kill, injure and maim civilians in huge numbers as these weapons produce ionising radiation which kills or sickens those exposed, contaminates the environment and has long-term health consequences, including cancer and genetic damage which people can pass down to their future generations.

We have placed too much faith in nuclear deterrence always working. But, one day, it won't. This is why we have to consider the consequences of nuclear use. So, there must be concerted efforts to abolish nuclear weapons from around the world for a better and safer world. Some insights to advocate for this global demand are enumerated below:

First, world military spending is enormous. Perhaps, the roughly \$83 billion that nine states spend on nuclear weapons every year could be deployed to addressing climate change, poverty and global health issues.

Second, we would probably continue to rely on deterrence by conventional weapons. Advocates of nuclear weapons say we will face more warfare between the large states, but this is an assumption - nuclear weapons might have played some role in keeping the long peace between major states during the Cold War, but there were also other reasons for this. And what we see today is that some nuclear states are using their nuclear weapons as a coercive and threatening tool. If nuclear weapons were eliminated, there is still a lot we can do to minimize this warfare. At the end of the day, avoiding catastrophic nuclear war is better than the potential risk of more conventional wars.

Third, we need to remember that only nine states have nuclear weapons. If these states give up these weapons, the chances of other states wanting to acquire

nuclear weapons would also drop. As long as any one state has nuclear weapons, others will want them too - this is the story of proliferation. It is difficult to tell one state that they can't have nuclear weapons while other states have them and threaten to use them (for example, Israel).

Some people say that giving up nuclear weapons is dangerous because some other state will cheat and develop them covertly. Here, we need to keep in mind that detection of nuclear activity is very advanced and any state which tries to develop these weapons secretly will not be able to do so. Once any such development is detected, clearly the full weight of the international community can be brought to bear against that state. In other words, it is much easier to sustain a non-nuclear norm in a world without nuclear weapons than it is to try and stop proliferation in a world where some states seem to be permitted, but others are not permitted, to have them.

It's also important to remember that the call for nuclear weapons elimination is not for unilateral or unbalanced disarmament: it is for a gradual, balanced, phased and fully verified process of disarmament of all nuclear states, including the non-democratic ones. It won't be easy, but it can be done.

The writer is a CSS aspirant.



BANNING NUCLEAR WEAPONS

NPT

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, is a landmark international treaty that represents the only binding commitment in a multilateral treaty to the goal of disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States. Opened for signature in 1968, the Treaty entered into force in 1970. On 11 May 1995, the Treaty was extended indefinitely. A total of 191 States have joined the Treaty, including the five nuclear-weapon States. More countries have ratified the NPT than any other arms limitation and disarmament agreement, a testament to the Treaty's significance.



IN CONVERSATION

WITH

Rashid Ali

4th in Punjab; PMS 2022-23

JWT Editorial Board

Jahangir's World Times (JWT): First of all, please tell something about your educational background.

RA: I have done my graduation (BSc Honours) in Zoology from Government College University, Lahore.

JWT: How helpful did you find Jahangir's World Times (JWT) in your preparation for the PMS exam? And, how was your experience at the World Times Institute (WTI)?

RA: World Times Institute played a pivotal role in my journey of competitive examinations. Lectures at WTI and the magazines and books it publishes were of significant help for me in scoring good marks in the written part of the PMS exam. Apart from that, World Times magazine also played an important role in my preparation for interviews.

JWT: What was the significance of newspaper reading in your preparation? How did staying updated with current affairs shape your success?

RA: Newspapers are always important for preparation for all competitive examinations. They help in improving vocabulary as well as staying updated on national and international affairs. Apart from books, magazines and the internet, newspapers were one of the major sources I used for making notes.

JWT: What was your overall strategy for cracking the PMS exam?

"Lectures at WTI and the magazines and books it publishes were of significant help for me in scoring good marks in the written part of the PMS exam."



RA: I used multiple sources so as to diversify the outlines of my answers. Besides diversification, inclusion of flow charts, diagrams, maps and quotations is equally important. Time management is also a pertinent issue, especially in the PMS exam. Therefore, one must do rigorous written practice before appearing in the final exam.

JWT: What was your approach to time management throughout the preparation process? How did you balance multiple subjects and cover the vast syllabus?

RA: As far as the matter of time management is concerned, I had done a lot of written practice through notes-making and mock exams. During the exam, I tried to allocate equal time to each question. In my opinion, one must start attempting the very first question as if it is the last one.

Detailed Marks Sheet	
Subject	Marks
Compulsory Subjects	
English Essay	55
English (Précis & Composition)	57
General Knowledge	58
Urdu	76
Pakistan Affairs	68
Islamic Studies	66
Optional Subjects	
1. Political Science	151
2. Zoology	133
3. Punjabi	140
Total Written	804
Viva Voce	123.4
Grand Total	927.4

Selection of optional subjects

In order to select a particular subject, one must consider these three things:

1. Degree
2. Interest
3. Background knowledge

Notes-making

Prepare a particular topic from different sources, and make your own notes.

Revision

One should revise the complete syllabus 2-3 times before appearing in the final exam. One should also keep revising and updating one's notes.



INTERVIEW



JWT: What were the challenges you encountered during your preparation journey and the ways in which you overcame them?

RA: Everyone faces his/her fair share of challenges during struggle times. Therefore, staying motivated is critically important. My family supported me throughout my journey and kept me motivated. I was able to crack this exam with their unflinching support and persistent motivation.

JWT: What, in your opinion, is the key to getting through the compulsory papers of the PMS exam, especially that of General Knowledge?

RA: As I mentioned earlier, one must use multiple sources to prepare for compulsory as well as optional subjects. I used to collect data from the recommended books, JWT magazine, notes, newspapers and the internet, and then make my own compilation of the answers. As for the GK paper, it must be prepared on a daily basis, and instead of cramming the MCQs, topics must be prepared through in-depth study.

grammar. Background knowledge of the given topic is also equally important. Apart from that, the whole essay must be structured properly. Introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion, each part has its

My Interview Experience

My interview experience was good. It lasted around 28 minutes. The panelists had made stern faces; however, I remained calm and answered the questions confidently.

own proper structure that must be followed.

JWT: Since you have scored excellent marks in Political Science and Punjabi, what was your strategy for both these papers?

RA: For Political Science, I used to add a heading "Background of the philosopher or major philosophical ideas" immediately after the introduction.

Similarly, in Punjabi, I used to add a proper heading (that described the given topic) after the introduction.

JWT: Should there be some word limit kept in mind while writing answers?

RA: There is no particular word limit for writing answers; however, an answer should span 5 to 8 pages.

JWT: Is it better to attempt optional papers in Urdu or one should go with English only?

RA: It depends on the command of the candidates on a particular language.

JWT: How should one choose Optional Subjects?

RA: The decision to select the optional subjects should depend on one's degree, interest and the background knowledge of a particular subject.

JWT: As interviewers usually grill the interview candidates, how did you manage the situation?

RA: Interview is the test of your nerves, not knowledge. One must stay calm, focused and composed throughout the interview. As I had already appeared in the interview for CSS 2021 exam, I had some experience of going through the process.

Throughout the interview, I did not lose my posture and answered the questions confidently.

JWT: Who deserves the credit for your success?

RA: My family deserves all the credit for my success, as they kept motivating and supporting me throughout my journey. ☐

Rapid Fire

Your inspiration	My father
Attempts	02
Schooling medium	English
Your qualification	BSc (Hons) in Zoology
Alma mater	GCU, Lahore
Your study schedule	6-8 hours a day
Your sources	Recommended books, internet, JWT magazine, etc.
Your hobbies	Cricket
Your strength	Consistency
Fave personality	The Holy Prophet (SAW)
Fave book	Pakistan – A Dream Gone Sour by Roedad Khan
Fave quote	"Verily, with hardships, there is relief" (Quran)
Secret of your success	Positive attitude and consistency in struggle
Your role model	My father

JWT: How should answers be written to get maximum marks in the written part of the PMS exam?

RA: Firstly, choose the questions wisely and make a rough outline at the last page of the answer sheet. Then, attempt the question according to that outline. Add maps, flow charts and diagrams to your answers. This would also help in time management.

JWT: How did you structure your Essay?

RA: English Essay is the most-feared subject in the competitive examinations, especially CSS and PMS. So, to ace this crucial paper, one must have a good command on basic

Advice for Fresh Aspirants

Only consistent hard work is the key to success.

Jahangir's World Times (JWT): Please tell us about your educational background.

Syed Umar Shafiq (SUS): I am, basically, a civil engineer. Alongside this, I completed a simple graduation from PU, which led to my recommendation for this job.

JWT: How long did it take you to prepare for Naib Tehsildar (Punjab Revenue Department) exam?

SUS: It took me around 1.5 to 2 years, to prepare for and compete in competitive exams.

JWT: What were your principal sources for the preparation for this exam?

SUS: I prepared from various resources such as Dawn newspaper, multiple websites and various books, including the GK book published by World Times Publications.

JWT: How helpful was Jahangir's World Times during your preparations?

SUS: JWT was vital during my preparation for this exam, as it kept me updated on current affairs. Its articles and interviews with successful candidates helped me develop my stance, which proved fruitful during the interview.

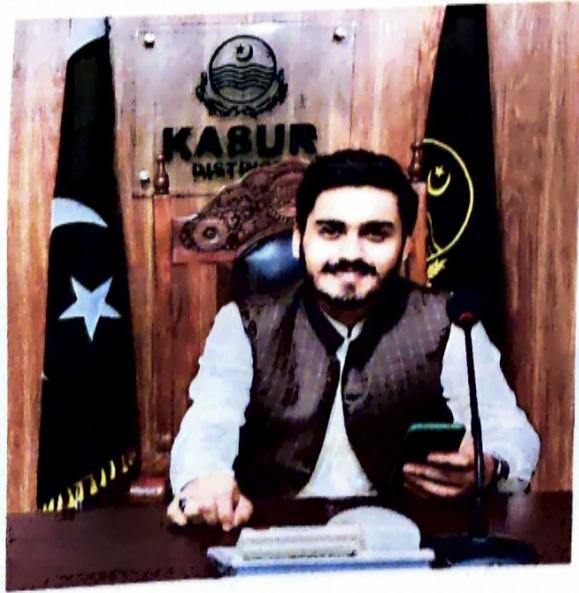
JWT: How was your experience at the World Times Institute?

SUS: The WTI proved immensely beneficial for me as it provided me with an environment conducive to enhancing my knowledge and boosting my confidence. Moreover, the mentors at WTI offered invaluable tips and guidance for effective preparation.

JWT: How should the new aspirants start preparations for one-paper exams?

SUS: For new aspirants, I must emphasize that there are no shortcuts to success. It is essential to maintain consistency, augment your basics and prepare thoroughly and intelligently, taking into account the evolving trends of PPSC, or any other public service commission for that matter.

"The WTI proved immensely beneficial for me as it provided me with an environment conducive to enhancing my knowledge and boosting my confidence."



JWT: What areas should they focus on?

SUS: For such exams, major emphasis should be on English, particularly on learning its basics. Regarding GK, prioritizing current affairs and computer fundamentals is essential.

JWT: What is, in your opinion, an ideal timetable for a sound preparation?

SUS: We cannot specify a preset timetable for all aspirants, as every individual has different capacities and skills for gaining knowledge. Setting smaller goals on a daily basis is advisable. However, consistency is the key to acing this exam.

JWT: What strategy should the in-job aspirants adopt as they have scant time at their disposal?

SUS: In-job aspirants, given limited time available to them, should prioritize smart work over hard work. They need to understand the current trends in paper setting and prepare accordingly. Nonetheless, I would again say that consistency remains the key factor.

JWT: How did you handle the interview pressure while before the panel?

SUS: Interview part of a competitive exam primarily tests your nerves and ability to handle pressure; skills that can only be honed through practice. When facing a public service commission panel, you should bear in mind

that they already acknowledge your knowledge that led you there. So, stay calm, be eloquent and provide precise answers.

Drawing from my experience of ten-odd interviews, along with mock interviews at World Times Institute, I gained immense confidence and grasped multiple interview dynamics.

JWT: Please share some questions the panellists asked during the interview.

SUS: Every panel has a different frame of mind. The panel that recommended me conducted most of my interview on literature; they asked me about different writers and their contributions to their respective genres.

JWT: On the basis of your experience, what tips would you give to prospective aspirants?

SUS: I would advise all the aspiring students to be consistent in their approach and prepare smartly. They must always believe in following the right process; and the result will take care of itself. ■

**Confabulating with
Syed Umar Shafiq
Naib Tehsildar**

(Punjab Revenue Department)

CYBERSECURITY



Safeguarding the Digital Realm

As we navigate through the intricate web of the digital age, one cannot underestimate the critical importance of cybersecurity. In this era of interconnectedness, where the internet serves as the lifeline of global communication, commerce and social interaction, safeguarding our digital infrastructure becomes paramount.

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Areesha Ahmad

threats and vulnerabilities. These threats manifest in myriad forms, including malware, phishing attacks, ransomware and denial-of-service (DoS) attacks. By scrutinizing the characteristics and behaviours of these threats, researchers can discern patterns, devise detection mechanisms and formulate effective countermeasures to thwart them. Another pivotal area of research revolves around crafting secure protocols

and encryption algorithms to shield sensitive data during transmission and storage.

Cryptography, the art of encoding and decoding information, plays a pivotal role in ensuring the confidentiality, integrity and authenticity of data in digital communications. Thus, researchers continuously strive to refine cryptographic techniques and algorithms to outpace emerging threats and vulnerabilities.

Furthermore, cybersecurity research delves into deciphering human behaviour and psychology within the realm of cybersecurity.

Cybersecurity, in essence, refers to the practice of protecting computer systems, networks and data from unauthorized access, cyberattacks and other digital threats. Its significance cannot be overstated, and as technology advances, so do the methods and sophistication of cyber threats. Therefore, delving into cybersecurity research becomes imperative to ensure safety and integrity of our digital landscape.

Cybersecurity research encompasses a broad spectrum of disciplines, ranging from computer science to cryptography, network security and behavioural analysis. Researchers delve into various facets of cybersecurity to comprehend how cyber threats operate, develop strategies to mitigate risks and bolster the resilience of digital systems.

One crucial aspect of cybersecurity research involves dissecting different types of cyber

CYBERCRIME INDEX

Ranking countries by cybercrime threat level

Ranking	Country	WCI score	Ranking	Country	WCI score
1	Russia	58.39	11	Iran	4.78
2	Ukraine	36.44	12	Belarus	3.87
3	China	27.86	13	Ghana	3.58
4	United States	25.01	14	South Africa	2.58
5	Nigeria	21.28	15	Moldova	2.57
6	Romania	14.83	16	Israel	2.51
7	North Korea	10.61	17	Poland	2.22
8	United Kingdom	9.01	18	Germany	2.17
9	Brazil	8.93	19	Netherlands	1.92
10	India	6.13	20	Latvia	1.68

An international team of researchers has prepared the first 'World Cyber Crime Index' after 3 years of intensive research

Human error and negligence often contribute to security breaches and data leaks. By scrutinizing user behaviour and decision-making processes, researchers can devise user-friendly security mechanisms, implement effective security awareness programs and mitigate the risks posed by human factors in cybersecurity.

The purpose of cybersecurity research transcends mere defence against cyber threats; it entails fostering innovation, cultivating collaboration and nurturing a robust cybersecurity ecosystem.

organizations to detect and mitigate cyber threats in real time, thereby safeguarding critical infrastructure and sensitive information from unauthorized access and exploitation.

Moreover, cybersecurity research plays a pivotal role in upholding individual privacy rights and democratic values in the digital age. However, the proliferation of cyber threats underscores the potential risks and negative consequences associated with inadequate cybersecurity measures.

Cyberattacks targeting govern-

cyberextortion, poses a grave threat to individuals, businesses and communities worldwide. The exploitation of vulnerabilities in digital systems and networks enables cybercriminals to perpetrate crimes anonymously, evade law enforcement and exploit victims on a global scale.

In conclusion, cybersecurity research plays a pivotal role in safeguarding the digital realm and protecting the interests of individuals, organizations and nations in an increasingly interconnected world. By understand-

National Cybercrime Investigation Agency (NCCIA)

The growing use of information technology and digital tools has left our society vulnerable to cybercrimes. The transformative impact of the Internet has led to an increase in online crimes in the country. Owing to an unbridled freedom of expression on social media, the importance of protecting individuals' rights online has become crucial. So, in what can be called an effort to combat the rising menace of cybercrimes in Pakistan, the government has created a new body named the National Cybercrime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) which has been tasked solely with focusing on combating cybercrimes in the country.

Introduction

Rendering the Federal Investigation Agency's cybercrime wing as dysfunctional, the Government of Pakistan has established an agency for combating cybercrimes and enforcing social media regulations in the country. Named the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA),

the body has been created under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016, for cybercrime investigations. Previously, these powers were held by the FIA under the Act. Henceforth, all personnel, cases, inquiries, investigations, assets, liabilities, rights, obligations, privileges and matters related to the defunct cybercrime wing stand transferred to the NCCIA.

Structure

The NCCIA will be headed by a director-general who will be appointed by the Federal Government for a term of two years.

The NCCIA Director General will exercise powers equivalent to those of an Inspector General of Police.

The staff members of the defunct cybercrime wing of the FIA performing functions under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Investigation Rules, 2018 or under any other instrument, will continue to perform their duties for a period of one year, till appointment of persons in the service of the NCCIA on a regular basis.

Through interdisciplinary research endeavours and partnerships between academia, industry and government agencies, researchers can leverage diverse expertise and resources to tackle complex cybersecurity challenges effectively.

The benefits of cybersecurity research are manifold and evident in numerous aspects of society. Advancements in intrusion-detection systems and anomaly-detection algorithms enable

ment agencies, financial institutions, healthcare providers and businesses can result in significant financial losses, operational disruptions and the compromise of sensitive data. Moreover, the rise in cyber espionage, cyber warfare and state-sponsored cyberattacks poses serious threats to national security and geopolitical stability.

Furthermore, the prevalence of cybercrime, including identity theft, online fraud and

ing the nature of cyber threats, developing innovative solutions and fostering collaboration among stakeholders, researchers can mitigate risks, enhance resilience and ensure the continued security and stability of our digital infrastructure.

As we navigate the complex challenges of cyberspace, investing in cybersecurity research remains essential to securing a safer and more resilient future for all. ■



S. Malik

... and
Deterrence
and Strategic
Stability in
South Asia

Although the two nuclear rivals in South Asia, i.e. India and Pakistan, have avoided nuclear war thus far, they have engaged in several conventional military operations against each other since publicly declaring their nuclear weapons capabilities in May 1998. This mutual nuclearization led to a high degree of strategic stability in South Asia as the region became overtly nuclear, prompting a change in Pakistan's nuclear posture to asymmetric escalation. The need for Pakistan to adopt an overtly

this missile program was meant to build anti-tank guided missiles, it was terminated shortly due to various reasons. However, New Delhi initiated a dedicated missile program in 1985. In return, Islamabad started to develop its own missile program, in 1987. General Mirza Aslam Beg, Pakistan's former Chief of Army Staff, wrote in his article "Ghauri Won't Rock the Region" that General Ziaul Haq, who was the President of Pakistan at that time, took two crucial decisions:

(i) Pakistan would not develop chemical weapons; and

The strategic stability debate in South Asia is largely influenced by the complex and volatile relationship between nuclear rivals India and Pakistan. Both countries have been in a confrontational relationship since their independence from the British rule and they share a long history of rivalry that features several military crises and wars. Pakistan has long recognized the significance of maintaining a strategic balance in the region. With a history of conflicts and simmering tensions with its neighbour, India, Pakistan's pursuit of strategic equilibrium is rooted in the need to ensure its national security and safeguard regional stability. By carefully managing its military capabilities and diplomatic engagements, Pakistan endeavours to maintain a delicate balance that serves as a deterrent against aggression while fostering opportunities for peace and cooperation. The following article is aimed at exploring the role of Pakistan's delivery systems in maintaining deterrence and strategic stability in South Asia.

aggressive nuclear posture arose owing to India's conventional military superiority, and Pakistan's dissatisfaction with the territorial status quo. Pakistan's nuclear preparation and doctrine have been based on fairly clear and straightforward means to forge a credible deterrent to counter India.

Introduction

Pakistan's missile program, like its nuclear program, is driven by its security imperatives and threat perceptions. When India initiated a missile race in 1958, it intensified Islamabad's security concerns. Although

(ii) the country would build missiles of short- and medium-range capabilities that will be equipped with proper guidance systems.

Hence, Pakistan's delivery systems are an essential component of deterrence against India and these have played a crucial role not only in establishing a strategic balance but also in ensuring strategic stability in the region.

Pakistan's missile program is meant to counter India only, as its missiles range between 60km (Nasr) and 2,700km (Shaheen-III). On the other hand, India has

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50km (Exocet) to 5000-8000km (Agni-V) missiles. India's intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) Agni V was developed to counter China, but it covers Asia, Europe and the Indian Ocean, as well as most of the African continent, characterizing India's global ambitions.

Pakistan's missile arsenals form an important part of its defence strategy for offsetting the significant conventional military advantages of India. It consists primarily of mobile, short- and medium-range ballistic missiles. The country is also making significant strides in its cruise missile capability. Pakistan's combined strategic forces allow the delivery of conventional as well as nuclear warheads to almost any target in India

1. Nuclear-capable delivery systems of Pakistan

Pakistan is capable of producing missiles on its own, as all of its delivery systems are developed indigenously. The production plants of the country are generating fissile material for the warheads, and missiles are based on an advanced missile technology - for the sake of delivery of the nuclear warheads, in case a nuclear war becomes inevitable. Pakistan's nuclear delivery system aims to create deterrence against its nuclear rival, i.e. India. The country's Full Spectrum Deterrence (FSD) is within the bounds of credible minimum deterrence which involves deterrence against all forms of aggression through a combination of conventional and strategic forces. This has, in turn, revamped Pakistan's conventional war-fighting doctrine, now titled "comprehensive response." The FSD enables Pakistan to hit any target in India and acquire appropriate coverage and numbers to deter the adversary's pronounced policy of massive retaliation. Pakistan possesses a variety of nuclear weapons in different categories, including at strategic, operational and tactical levels. To make the nuclear delivery system credible, the country has developed air-based, land-based and sea-launched nuclear delivery systems.

a. Nuclear-capable ballistic missiles

All nuclear-capable ballistic missiles of Pakistan are meant to counter Indian aggression. Pakistan currently has six operational nuclear-capable, land-based ballistic missiles of the Hatf series. Pakistan developed Abdali (Hatf-2 - range: 189-200km),



Ghaznavi (Hatf-3 - range: 290km) and Shaheen-I (Hatf-4 - range: 750km) to counter India's Prithvi-I (150km), Agni-I (700-800km) and Prithvi-II (250km). Similarly, the nuclear capability of Ghauri (Hatf-5), which has a range of 1,500km, gives it the ability to hit targets deep within Indian territory, making it an integral part of Pakistan's strategic missile forces. The first test of Ghauri in 1998 led India to test the 2000km of Agni-II.

Nasr (Hatf-9 - range: 60km) is a tactical weapon that neutralized India's Cold Start Doctrine - a limited-war strategy designed to seize Pakistan's

territory swiftly without risking a

nuclear conflict. In an interview at the

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Lt. Gen. Khalid Ahmed Kidwai said, "Nasr, specifically, was born out of the compulsion of this thing that I mentioned about some people on the other side toying with the idea of finding space for conventional war, despite Pakistan's nuclear weapons." It has effectively closed all the avenues that India was trying to find for a limited war under the nuclear threshold.

Shaheen-II's (range: 2000km) test came just one day after the Indian Air Force tested the BrahMos cruise missile (range: 290-350km) from a Su-30MKI fighter in May 2022. It is a two-stage solid-fuel, medium-range ballistic missile indigenously developed by Pakistan. Shaheen-II is a highly capable missile that meets Pakistan's strategic needs for the maintenance of desired deterrence and stability in the region. It is more capable than India's BrahMos that was accidentally fired due to malfunctioning in March 2022. This accidental firing raised a serious question about the capability of the BrahMos missile.

Three other nuclear-capable ballistic missiles have recently been tested, including the medium-range Shaheen-IA (range: 900km; it is an updated version of Shaheen-I), Shaheen-III (range: 2,750km) and the Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicles (MIRVs) Ababeel having a range of 2,200km. The missile was developed to counter India's S-400 ballistic missile defence system. Ababeel can exhaust the S-400 and have a substantial impact on its effectiveness.

In the future, it is imperative for Pakistan to reinforce this technology to deter India. Pakistan's indigenous missiles, with stealth capabilities, have the capability to

penetrate the S-400. The current missiles, such as the Babur cruise missile system, the Ra'ad air-launched cruise missile and the Ghaznavi, Abdali and Shaheen, are capable of firing from a safe standoff range and can be deployed to preempt and attack the S-400 system itself. Moreover, Shaheen-III covers the entire landmass of India, including the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, where India has set up a triad command service that can be used as a second-strike capability.

b. Nuclear-capable aircraft

The nuclear-capable aircraft of Pakistan made its airstrike capability stronger and more credible. Pakistan's combat aircraft, the F-16, Miraj-III and Miraj-V, are capable of delivering nuclear warheads. Mirage-V is believed to have been given a strike role with Pakistan's arsenal of nuclear gravity bombs, while the Mirage-III has been used for test launches of Pakistan's Ra'ad (Hatf-8) air-launched cruise missile (ALCM), as well as the follow-on of Ra'ad-II ALCM. The Pakistani Air Force has added an aerial refuelling capability to the Mirage, a capability that greatly enhances the nuclear-strike mission. In addition, Ra'ad can deliver nuclear and conventional warheads with great accuracy and

precision. The nuclear-capable aircraft F-16 has a range of 850km and was purchased from the United States. The aircraft is capable of hitting its target, as demonstrated in February 2019, when the F-16 shot down two Indian aircraft, the Sukhoi Su30MKI and MIG-21. One of the aircraft fell inside Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), while the other fell inside Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK).

c. Nuclear-capable Cruise Missiles

Pakistan also has three cruise missiles in development with land-, air- and sea-launch capabilities: Babur (Hatf-7) is a dual-capable, mobile land-based missile with a range of 350km. An improved version of Babur, the Babur-2/1(B), is being developed with a range of

900km. Babur-1 is a ground-launched cruise missile with a range of 600-700km. Babur 1A, tested in February 2021, with a range of 450km is the upgraded version of Babur-1. It can hit targets both on land and at sea. Babur-2 is considered an important force multiplier in Pakistan's strategic defense. Babur-3 SLCM, with a range of 450km, enabled Pakistan to enter the elite nuclear-armed submarine club. It is capable of delivering various types of payloads and provides Pakistan with credible second-strike capability. The Babur-3 will most likely be deployed on the diesel-electric Agosta class submarines.

In April 2015, the Pakistani government approved the purchase of air-independent, propulsion-powered submarines from China - the first one has been



launched recently. The operationalization of Babur-3 will not only provide Pakistan with a triad of nuclear strike platforms, but will also be useful in balancing regional ballistic missile defense architecture.

2. Conventional Weapon Delivery Systems

Pakistan's conventional weapons provide it with a range of response options and increase the nuclear threshold. Islamabad will not be forced to retaliate with nuclear weapons as an initial response to a limited conventional incursion. It is important to note that most of the nuclear-capable delivery systems of Pakistan are capable of carrying both nuclear and conventional warheads. In addition, Pakistan also has credible conventional delivery systems to retaliate in a small-scale war with India. Islamabad had inducted

the guided multi-launched rocket system (MLRS) primarily to hit targets without leaving behind unexploded ordnance. The extended-range guided MLRS is a developed variant of the guided MLRS family, usually with an extended range of up to 150km. Pakistan's prominent MLRS includes the Rehbar, Rahnuma and Shaper I and II. In August 2021, Pakistan also test-fired Fateh-I, which is a land-based guided MRLS having a 140km range. The weapon system gives the Pakistani military the capability of precision target engagement deep in enemy territory.

In the domain of conventional delivery system production, the Air Weapon Complex (AWC) produces a large number of conventional weapons as well as surveillance and reconnaissance equipment. The AWC produces extended-range bombs, target penetration bombs, infrared search and tracking (IRST), Global Positioning System (GPS) and air burst electronics fuses, among other things. The facility embarked on a project for the indigenous development of UAVs capabilities, such as Shahpar-II, Uqab, and Huma; Zumr-I (day and night surveillance system), AB Series (Electronic impact and proximity fuses), airborne video tape recorder (AVTR) and air combat manoeuvring instrumentation system (ACMI). All of these conventional delivery systems make Pakistan's defense infrangible.

In addition, Pakistan Aeronautical Complex (PAC) is contributing to the defense production of Pakistan. JF-17 Thunder is an advanced, lightweight, all-weather, day-night multi-role fighter aircraft developed as a joint venture between PAC and Chengdu Aircraft Industry Corporation (CAC) of China. It possesses excellent air-to-air and air-to-surface combat capabilities. The state-of-the-art avionics, optimally integrated sub-systems, computerized flight controls and capability to employ the latest weapons provide a decisive advantage to JF-17 over adversaries of the same class. This all-weather, multi-role light combat fighter has remarkable combat manoeuvrability at medium and low altitudes. With effective firepower, agility and combat survivability, the aircraft is likely to emerge as a potent platform for any air force. The PAC is also developing combat aircraft; Aircraft Rebuild Factory (ARF) of PAC is efficiently working for

overhauling aircraft including JF-17 thunder, F-7, F-7PG and K-8. The Chinese-made aircraft J10-C is another conventional aircraft that has been the main focus of the March 2022 Pakistan Day Parade. The aircraft is a medium-weight, all-weather jet that can be equipped with fourth-generation air-to-air missiles such as the short-range PL-10 and the beyond-visual-range PL-15.

Conclusion

To conclude, the delivery systems of Pakistan are the product of the relentless efforts of the country's National Command Authority, particularly the Strategic Plans Division. These indigenously developed delivery systems are the reason that the enemy, despite being twice as large and having twice as many resources, does not dare cast an evil eye on the motherland. Pakistan, with its delivery systems and defensive posture, has responded and will continue to respond through its own calm and calculated strategies, evolving pragmatic and cost-effective response options to correct the imbalance and re-establish the disturbed static stability very quickly whenever that happens.

Despite technology transfer by the West to India and the former's vivid discrimination against Pakistan, Islamabad's defense capabilities communicate its impregnable



defense. The development of delivery systems in Pakistan is not aimed at initiating an arms race but is to ensure regional peace, strategic stability and its defense. On both occasions - Balakot 2019 and Shorkot 2022 - Pakistan displayed restraint and maturity in diffusing the irresponsibly generated tensions, thereby preventing South Asia from spiralling into potential catastrophes. It will be hard to take Pakistan's restraint and maturity as a weakness and continue to test the limits of strategic stability. Perhaps, India is attempting to establish a pattern of incidents over time as a strategy to desensitize the international community for further future operations. ■

S. Malik is an independent researcher and she usually writes on international relations, strategic affairs and foreign policy.

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In ancient times, the division of labour between genders – in family and society – begot relations of dominance and subordination between men and women. Until the end of the 19th century, it was not possible for women to become equal partners with men in the process of production; instead, they were relegated to domestic labour. In the last few decades, feminist scholars have advanced the argument that women's emancipation is preconditioned by the right to be commodified and the formation of a dual-earner model. Therefore, the integration of women into the labour market has not merely been linked to the question of social equality and women's independence; female labour market participation has increasingly been justified in economic terms. More women in the labour market will increase the number of taxpayers, thereby ensuring the sustainability of the welfare state.

Women's Participation in Labour Force

Challenges and Prospects



In a world often defined by differences, the concept of gender has long been a focal point of discussion, debate and, sometimes, contention. However, when we step back and examine the intricacies of human existence, it becomes evident that men and women are not two opposing forces, but rather complementary aspects of the same spectrum. They are, indeed, two sides of the same coin. First, both men and women share a common humanity. Biologically, despite variances in anatomy and physiology, the fundamental building blocks of life remain consistent. We all experience emotions, aspirations and challenges, irrespective of gender. As explored in "The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature" by Steven Pinker, the human experience transcends gender boundaries, emphasizing the fundamental similarities that unite us.

The participation of women in the labour force is not only crucial for economic growth but it also plays a pivotal role in fostering sustainable peace and

Zakir Ullah

prosperity within society. As women increasingly join the workforce, their contributions extend beyond mere economic output. They serve as catalysts for higher productivity levels, actively contributing to poverty-alleviation efforts and playing a significant role in the reduction of gender-based violence. By engaging in gainful employment, women gain financial independence and decision-making power, leading to greater autonomy and empowerment. Women's participation in the labour force is essential for building thriving economies, fostering inclusive societies and advancing towards a more equitable and peaceful world.

In her research on the effects of women's participation in the labour force in the United States over nine decades (1890-1980), Harvard economist Claudia Goldin estimated that "the labour force participation rate of prime-aged females (15-64 years old) rose from 19.6% in 1890 to 59.9% in 1980." She estimated the effect of this increase on economic activity and concluded that "had the female labour force not

expanded over this period, national income per capita would probably have been at least 14% lower than it actually was."

There is no denying that the lack of women's participation in the labour force constitutes the biggest hurdle to our economic growth, hindering macroeconomic development and perpetuating dependency on aid while being trapped in a cycle of colonial lineage. Pakistani society is entrenched in misogynistic mindset, hyper-masculinity and deep-rooted patriarchy, which erode the individual identity and agency of women. Consequently, their contributions are often difficult to enumerate and acknowledge. Feminization and a myopic approach towards women's work relegate it to secondary status, posing a challenge for a country seeking to overcome socio-economic precarity by recognizing women's work as vital to economic progress.

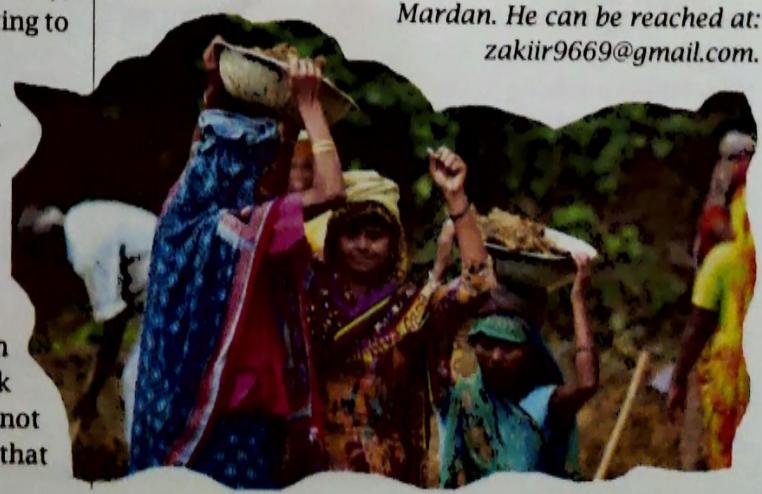
However, cultural norms, social values and religious indoctrinations have rendered Pakistani men unable to think rationally and consider women as equal partners and humans, often relegating them to mere roles in reproduction and objects for sexual satisfaction rather than recognizing their potential contribution to production and societal well-being. The labour force participation rates of women in Pakistan are among the lowest in the world. As of 2023, the female labour force participation rate stands worryingly low at 24%, compared to the male labour force rate of 81%. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has been tracking this indicator since 1990, and in the past 30 years, women's participation in the workforce has increased by only an abysmal 13%.

Moreover, women are heavily engaged in domestic chores, including cooking, cleaning, dishwashing and baby-caring from dawn to dusk, all of this work remains unpaid due to patriarchal constructs that confine such responsibilities to women. Similarly, women play crucial roles in harvesting, contributing to the steady and steep feminization of the agriculture sector. However, women's contributions are often unremunerated in family businesses and on family farms. Shockingly, activities such as managing livestock and producing agricultural goods for local consumption are frequently excluded from surveys and GDP calculations, further diminishing the recognition of women's labour. Research conducted by the Asian Development Bank reveals that almost 40% of women, who are not working, report that the main reason for this is that

male family members do not permit them to work outside the home. This is due to patriarchal norms, entrenched traditional customs, social stigmas and the cognitive inflexibility of parents, which restrict them from granting women permission for doing jobs outside the home. Another concerning trend in Pakistani workplaces is that female employees often face sexual abuse, intimidation and sexual harassment from male colleagues, which directly affects the psychological well-being of women and their ambitions to work and contribute to the productivity of the country.

To address these challenges, it is imperative for the government to take immediate measures so as to increase women's participation in the country's labour force. This involves recognizing and encouraging their contributions through effective policies and initiatives. One key aspect is improving transportation and city infrastructure to enhance women's mobility, which would significantly stimulate economic growth. Additionally, strict penalties should be enforced for those who engage in sexual harassment in the workplace, and safe environments must be ensured for women workers. There is an urgent need for the government to invest in quality education and provide technical training to children, regardless of gender. This is inevitable to address educational inequalities and promote gender equality in the country's workforce. In a nutshell, overcoming the barriers to women's participation in labour force in Pakistan requires a fundamental shift in societal attitudes and government policies. By replacing patriarchal and extremist tendencies with values of plurality, empathy, tolerance and inclusivity, Pakistan can unlock the full potential of its female population, leading to progress, enlightenment and prosperity for all. □

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COVER STORY

The Civil Service of Pakistan plays a crucial role in the functioning of the state and the government, as it is a body of people who provide expertise to the government in the formulation of policies and then implementing those. These are the civil servants who deliver public services across various sectors, contributing to the development and welfare of the Pakistani people. These civil servants are recruited through a rigorous selection process, the CSS exam, conducted by the Federal Public Service Commission, and every year, thousands of young men and women from across Pakistan chance their arm in this exam. However, in recent years, there has been a disheartening decrease in the number of those aspiring to join the civil service. In the following write-up, the author has analysed various issues that can be held responsible for this precipitous decline.

The Great CSS DECLINE

What leads to a fall in the number of aspirants and Where does the fault lie?

Prologue

The Civil Service of Pakistan has always been held in high esteem due to its historical legacy in general, and the role it played in state-building in the early years of Pakistan in particular. The fact that it is only after a gruelling recruitment process - arguably the most competitive of all examinations in the country - that civil service aspirants are recruited by the state, adds to its prestige. Vertical social mobility and a well-defined and secure career path with endless opportunities to serve in numerous positions over the course of 30-38 years of one's life, contribute to the attraction it holds for Pakistani youth lying in the age bracket of 21-30 years. This was reflected well in the increasing number of candidates for competitive exam (commonly known as CSS) from 4,810 registered candidates in 2007 to 39,650 registered candidates in 2021. But the year 2023 saw a surprisingly

Sarmad Jabbar

sharp decline in the number of candidates registering for, and appearing, in CSS exam - out of 28,024 candidates who registered for CE-2023 only 13,008 actually appeared. The last time such a sharp decline was seen was from CE-2015 to CE-2016 (Table 1), but that can be attributed to the change in syllabus and examination system, as evidenced by the fact that registrations and appearances both recovered quickly in CE-2017 and CE-2018 and continued to





increase thereafter. The number of aspirants registered also declined a bit from CE-2021 to CE-2022, which can be attributed once again to a change in examination system, i.e. the introduction of a screening test known as MPT (MCQs-based Preliminary Test). This is evident from the fact that despite fewer registrations, the actual number of candidates appearing in the exam increased, showing that MPT led to a greater commitment from those who registered. But the sharp decline in CE-2023, both in terms of registration and appearance, needs further investigation.

This decrease in the number of candidates in CE-2023 contravenes expectations - with economic instability and increasing unemployment, it was generally supposed that the number of those seeking a job in the public sector would increase, but on-ground realities are starkly different. Not only has the number of applicants decreased, but that of those actually appearing for the exam has also seen a downward trend, reaching a 5-year low - it was not this low even during COVID-19 pandemic when every activity was affected. The low point is even more concerning when seen in the context of Pakistan's population within the age bracket of 21-30 years. The population within this particular group has grown while candidature for CSS has fallen, particularly in 2023 (lowest in percentage), as shown in Table 2, with population data taken from the United Nations Population Division's "World Population Prospects (2022 Revision)".

Several factors can be identified for this decrease; some of them are enumerated here:

1. Change in Students' Preferences

As per the rules and regulations of the CSS exams, only those holding a bachelor's degree and lying within the age group of 21-30 years are eligible to

appear in the exam. It is also the same age group that shows the greatest interest in pursuing higher education, i.e. a master's degree or a doctorate. And in the academic year 2023, the number of Pakistani students who applied to universities abroad for such programs increased. As per Study Portals' Destination Europe Report, Pakistani students pursuing a master's degree in Europe rose in 2023 to more than 8% of the total number of international students in Europe, whereas up until 2022, Pakistani students comprised only 4.5% of this lot. Similarly, as per data available from "Open Doors," the total number of Pakistani students studying in the United States has increased in the past year - from 2019 to 2022, the number hovered around 8,000 every year, while it jumped to 10,164

in 2023. Moreover, according to the UK's Home Office, Pakistani nationals saw the largest percentage increase in sponsored study visas in the academic year ending in September 2023 - a 33% increase, signalling 33,150 study visas in a single year.

2. Post-Pandemic e-Learning Dynamics

In addition to such student migrations, there has been a rising global trend towards online and distance learning for diplomas, certifications and even degrees. While Pakistani youth initially refrained from this trend, perpetuation of online education

Candidature Trends	Aspirants Registered	Candidates Appeared
CE-2015	22,412	12,176
CE-2016	20,717	9,643
% Change (2015 to 2016)	7.56% decline	20.80% decline
CE-2021	39,650	17,240
CE-2022	32,059	20,262
% Change (2021 to 2022)	19.14% decline	17.53% increase
CE-2022	32,059	20,262
CE-2023	28,024	13,008
% Change (2022 to 2023)	12.59% decline	35.80% decline

CE Year	Applicants	Candidates Appeared	Population (21-30 Years)	Applicants (as % of Eligible Youth)	Candidates Appeared (as % of Eligible Youth)
2019	23,403	14,521	38,702,000	0.060%	0.038%
2020	39,630	18,553	39,308,000	0.100%	0.047%
2021	39,650	17,240	40,061,000	0.099%	0.043%
2022	32,059	20,262	40,974,000	0.078%	0.049%
2023	28,024	13,008	41,997,000	0.067%	0.031%

during the COVID-induced lockdowns forced a change. Owing to this, a portion of those who sought a job in the civil service right after graduation have shifted to learning in-demand skills online and using the global reach to secure freelance jobs. While this portion might be small and this trend might be fleeting, it has contributed to the decline in candida-

CSS Results	Applied	Appeared	Qualified		Allocated	Qualified (% of Appeared)		Appointed (% of Appeared)	Appointed (% of Interview Qualified)
			Written	Interview		Written	Interview		
CE-2019	23,403	14,521	372	365	214	2.56%	2.51%	1.47%	58.63%
CE-2020	39,630	18,553	376	364	221	2.03%	1.96%	1.19%	60.71%
CE-2021	39,650	17,240	365	349	207	2.12%	2.02%	1.20%	59.31%
CE-2022	32,059	20,262	393	374	237	1.94%	1.85%	1.17%	63.37%
CE-2023	28,024	13,008	401	386	210	3.08%	2.97%	1.61%	54.40%

ture for CSS.

3. Perception of Difficulty of CSS and Dwindling Education Standards

Coupled with the above two factors is the general notion that CSS exam is quite difficult. Passing and appointment ratios further cement this notion. As shown in Table 3, only 2.26% of the total appearing candidates were able to succeed (in the written exam and the interview) on average in the past 5 years. Those who were able to secure an appointment accounted for an even lesser 1.33% of the total number of candidates appearing. Furthermore, of those who passed the written exam and the interview, only 60% were finally appointed, while the remaining 40% ended up with nothing to show for their long, arduous journey. The fact that the CSS exam presents an unusually high probability of no gain despite candidates' best efforts also serves to deter many from the exams. While some might argue that this uncertainty was also there when a higher number of candidates were appearing, it would be best to contextualize this argument with the quality of education and work ethics that are being imparted to the young generation. The public sector's focus on universal enrolment at the primary level and the allocation of funds for higher education has wreaked havoc on Pakistan's secondary education - years in which critical thinking skills are honed. And a plethora of substandard private schools and colleges that focus only on preparing students for exams, instead of actually teaching them, have served to build an "ends-justify-the-means" mindset that makes students believe that shortcuts will get them through life. The will to put in hard work

with tenacity and patience has, unfortunately, dwindled. This is detrimental not only to the civil service exams but also to the nation in general. With those fortunate enough to receive a good education seeking study visas abroad and most of those left behind in Pakistan without the privilege of having a quality education, the perception of CSS being too difficult is bound to stick.

4. The Anti-Civil Service Campaign on Mass and Social Media

If one adds to the above factors, a general disillusionment of youth with the public sector, the picture becomes even more depressing. Over the years, there has been a tendency for media outlets (formal and informal) to highlight cases of corruption and politicization. This narrative has conveniently ignored the stories of civil servants who have dedi-



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COVER STORY

cated their lives and sacrificed everything in service of the state and the nation. When inspirational case studies become micro-narratives and scandalous stories forge mainstream narratives, disillusionment sets in, and the idea that those working in the public sector can bring about any change, small or substantial, for the positive, becomes a distant echo of old idealists who have no space in the real world. But, it is exactly such idealism that needs to be highlighted when cynicism is the order of the day. Without hope, after all, the glorious past is akin to fading fingerprints on an old and dusty handrail, while with hope, the path towards a better future is forged.

5. Political Instability-cum-Widespread Polarization and Youth's Disillusionment with the State

Despite the message of hope, it would be amiss to paper over genuine problems. Pakistan has a history of collateralizing the civil service in times of political instability. Those with a historical sense, therefore, are not to be blamed if they choose to wait out the storm before trying for the civil service again. And due to this instability, the state has been unable to focus on the five basic social values it is duty-bound to protect and provide, i.e. security, freedom, order, justice and welfare. Why would even the idealist faction of Pakistani youth wish to be a part of the system, to escape for which they are willing to try their luck abroad?

6. Economic Factors

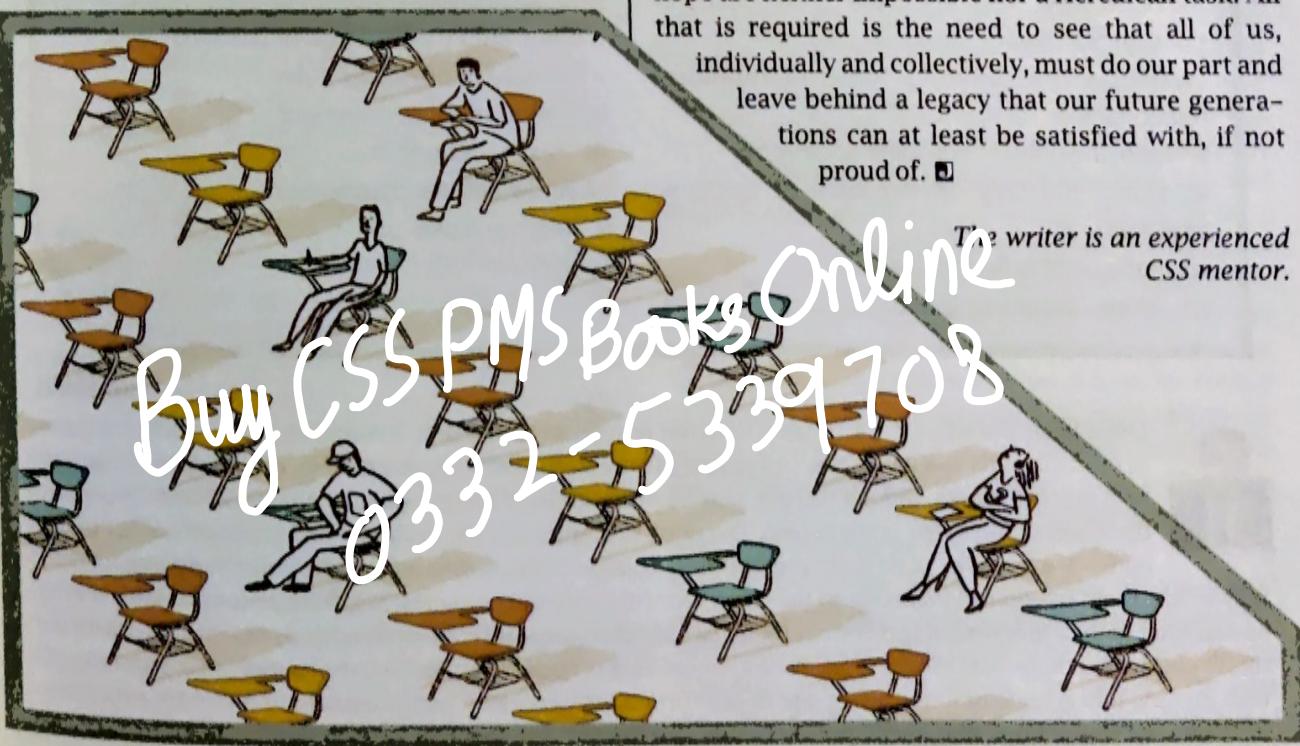
And lastly, coupled with political instability, as if it were a law of nature, is the economic unsustainability that has tightened its grip over Pakistan in recent years. Where the civil service once enjoyed reasonable salaries, and sound perks and privileges, it has now become infamous for its low salaries, which increase at snail's pace and fail to keep up with inflationary pressures, even as political pressures on the civil servants increase and their work hours become unbridled. The young Pakistanis are, then, free of blame if they opt for career opportunities that accord better remuneration without the same stressors as those faced by civil servants. Additionally, preparation for civil service exams is a time-consuming process and requires graduates to dedicate months to it. But under current inflationary pressures, it is not possible for most of the youth coming from the middle and lower-middle classes to opt out of the job market, even for a few months. Dreams and aspirations should not have to be sacrificed on the altar of economic necessities, but unfortunately, that is not the kind of Pakistan that has been offered to those for whom the world could still be their oyster.

Final Thoughts

It is high time to rectify the trajectory of our country. With even the slightest of the will to bring about some positive impact, the basic necessities for the improvement of the lot of our youth, regaining their trust and confidence, and provision of some ray of hope are neither impossible nor a Herculean task. All that is required is the need to see that all of us, individually and collectively, must do our part and leave behind a legacy that our future generations can at least be satisfied with, if not proud of. ■

The writer is an experienced CSS mentor.

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HOPE

Outline

THE GREATEST DRIVING FORCE

1. Introduction
2. Hope: Definition and understanding
 - i. Definition
 - ii. General understanding and concept
3. Facts proving hope to be the greatest driving force of life
 - i. Hope: the soul of freedom movements
 - ii. Hope: the force behind efforts for fundamental human rights
 - iii. Hope: encouraging people to participate in political activities
 - iv. Hope: the binding force in humans' relationships
 - v. Hope: the only reason for philanthropy
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- system
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- xi. Hope: the only motivation for the astronauts
4. Hope as a stagnating element: The other side of the picture
 - i. Hope of financial stability generating lethargy
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5. Elements that nurture or destroy hope
 - i. Mental and physical health
 - ii. Surrounding environment
 - iii. Past experiences
 - iv. Knowledge and awareness
 - v. Talent and skill
6. Conclusion



Asim Raza

Life is beautiful when it starts, yet it does not remain so till the time it comes to an end. Different types of predicaments and issues start engulfing life even in its early years, and thus the sweetness begins to turn into bitterness, though its pace may be different for different people. Against all odds, however, the wheel of life keeps going round. The thing that supports the existence and continuity of life in the midst of every type of despair and darkness is hope. Hope is indubitably the greatest driving force in human life. From freedom movements to the efforts for fundamental human rights, from people's relations with one another to their investment in different financial opportunities, and from philanthropy to religious practices, this is nothing but hope that makes everything happen. This is hope that gives one the courage to accept failures with dignity; this is hope that motivates one to call forth all the energies and potentials, and tread forward in a focused way; this is hope that keeps people united and disciplined; and this is hope that protects one against

psychological issues and works as a sword against the idols of disappointment and dismay. At the same time, it needs to be realized that there are only a few instances where hope, instead of inculcating energy and promoting action, results in inactivity and lethargy. Likewise, it is further pertinent to highlight that there are a number of factors that play a negative or a positive role in the existence of hope in one's life.

Before delineating in detail the ways hope serves as the greatest force in human life, it is imperative to define it so as to have a fair understanding of the term.

Hope is the feeling about the happening, or not happening, of any incident or the generation, or not generation, of a particular result or outcome. Hope can be associated with a particular thing, an event or someone's behaviour. Hope reflects an optimistic state of mind that makes someone desire and positively expect something. The element of hope is definitely involved in everyone's life, regardless of age, gender, sex or creed.

There is no denying that hope gives people the courage to accept failures and utilize their energies and potentials in the best possible way. It keeps one protected against psychological issues and helps one face the predicaments with a swag; and it injects discipline and unity in nations. The functioning of hope as a great driving force is visible in all sectors of human life. First of all, this is hope that is the engine of all the freedom movements that have been launched, or are still being run, in the world. Freedom movements demand a number of sacrifices from the freedom fighters, and this is nothing but hope that motivates them to offer those. People sacrifice their lives, families, property and wealth just because they have the hope that their contribution will be rewarded either in the form of success, as an acknowledgement on the pages of history, or on the Day of Judgement. The freedom movements in Palestine and Kashmir are the epitome of the role that hope can play in keeping the struggle alive. Millions of people have lost their lives at both places collectively, yet the flame of freedom struggle is still lit as it was in the beginning, and this is hope that deserves credit for it.

In the very same way, this is hope that not only made people struggle for fundamental human rights in the past, but is also prodding them to do so in the present time, in a number of ways. This was merely hope that was behind Nelson Mandela's fight against apartheid, Martin Luther King's movement for racial equality, Malala Yousafzai's campaign for girls' education, Mahatma Gandhi's resistance against untouchability and social discrimination in India, and Angela Davis's efforts for prison reforms and justice. Had hope not been there as a major driving force, no one would have dared to challenge the status quo prevailing in society

Hope is the pillar that holds up the world. Hope is the dream of a waking man.

Pliny the Elder

for centuries.

Then we see politicians using their energies and resources, particularly when elections are around. What makes them do so? Hope! This is the hope of winning the contest that makes them use every possible means to be victorious. And this is not limited to politicians only, their supporters and even the general voters are motivated to take part in the whole process just in the hope of getting the requisite results. The role that hope plays in the electoral process becomes significantly visible when one compares the electoral activities of general elections with those of bye-elections. In bye-elections, the voter turnout rate declines by more than fifty percent just because the element of hope of having any political change in the country is missing. Remove the factor of hope from politics, and there will be no political activity anywhere, in any form.

In the social sector, the most formidable bond that one can see is that of parents with their children. This relationship, too, without an iota of doubt, rests on hope and expectations. Parents look after the children in the best possible way: they spend money, bear hardships, face torrid situations and go through a number of challenging phases without letting any harm occur to their kids, just in the hope that their love will get reciprocation, one way or another. The desire for a male child in countries like Pakistan and India is specifically due to the fact that parents are hopeful that their sons will look after them when they are old and fragile. Whether the hopes materialize or not is an altogether separate discussion, yet it is an irrefutable reality that this is hope that gives strength and colour to the relationship of children with their parents. The role of hope is not limited to parent-child relationship only, it is there in every human bond, though its extent and form may be different. One friend's extending support to the other, a husband's trying to remain loyal to his wife, and even a boss's granting undue favours to his beautiful secretary is inspired by the hope of having a positive response in return. The moment the base provided by hope gets dislocated, the whole building of the human relationship, however high and beautiful,

comes to ground.

Just like many other things, this is hope that is the soul of all philanthropic activities in the world. Why would anyone spend his money, energies and time for others when he has no hope of any sort of outcome or reward? In such activities, some may have the hope that they will be rewarded in the eternal life for being magnanimous; some might have the hope that they will be remembered in good words in the annals of human history, and some might be hoping to have some worldly benefits and rewards. Even those philanthropists who don't want any type of reward for their acts at least do have the hope that their action will bring benefits to the people who are deprived and downtrodden. The moment someone feels that his actions won't bring the targeted results, he stops using his resources without giving any further consideration. Hope is definitely the greatest driving force in human life.

Similarly, the whole institution of religion is based on hope. Whether it is Islam, Christianity Hinduism or Buddhism, all the followers of these religions are inspired by the idea that their deeds are being recorded in the eternal book and hope that they will be rewarded for their good deeds. And this hope is not baseless; it is instilled in their minds by their religious texts and scriptures that categorically condition the rewards in the eternal life with good deeds. Even atheists are driven by hope, though it is slightly different in nature. Atheists do not perform religious practices and rituals just because they have the hope that they won't be bothered to get up and answer for their faiths and deeds once they get mixed in the soil. So this is hope that is the real driving force behind the religious approach of every person.

In the field of business, too, when the entry for hope is deleted, the activities on the journal come to a complete halt. This is the hope of profit that spurs an investor to make an investment; this is the hope of enhancing sales that makes an industrialist produce more goods; this is the hope of attracting customers that makes a shopkeeper keep his shop open even at midnight; this is the hope of having clients that makes a lawyer sit in his chamber and a doctor sit in his clinic. From production to sales, and from sales to after-sale services, the whole cycle of business revolves around the axis of hope and expectations. The same is the case in financial institutions, where people deposit their monies with a hope that it will be available on demand with profit, and the financial institutions extend loans to the business community in a hope that the debt will not turn bad and they will be able to generate money. Hope, without any iota of doubt, is the greatest driving force of life.

Again, the functioning of the judicial system in all the countries of the world rests on the element of hope. Why do people approach courts when they consider

themselves to be aggrieved in any way? Simply because they are hopeful of getting retribution or compensation for their suffering! Would anyone ever knock on the door of courts if he were sure that the courts would not do justice? No, not at all! And the higher the extent of hope, the more the trend of resorting to courts. In developed countries, for instance, those who face any sort of highhandedness or cruelty, never try to revenge themselves on the oppressors; as they are hopeful to the extent of surety that no one can be above the law; they simply go to court and wait for justice to be dispensed. Without the element of hope, everyone would try to settle their own score without approaching the courts.

Similarly, the thing that makes farmers sow the seeds in the land, makes patients allow the cutting of their bodies in operation theatres, and makes astronauts leave the atmosphere of the earth is hope. This is hope that shines like a star in the dark nights and appears like a beam of light at the end of a tunnel. This is hope that keeps individuals focused and organized and keeps nations united and disciplined. Without the element of hope, one cannot even walk on the ground, as it is hope that gives one the courage to lift the foot in the air to move ahead.

Though hope is the greatest driving force in human life and many more cases can be cited to vindicate this fact, it is also an irrefutable reality that hope, at times,



results in the atrophy of limbs and stagnation of energies. Children of immensely rich people, for instance, are rarely found utilizing their inborn talents and potentials just because they are hopeful of having a successful and blessed life without making any effort for it. Likewise, the depravity and sharp decline of morality in Muslim society is an outcome of the false hope that the clergy has instilled in the minds of the Muslims by saying that every Muslim, regardless of his deeds, is eventually bound to end up in heaven, whereas the followers of other religions will be thrown in hell despite all their good deeds. Quite understandably, why should a Muslim choose the difficult path of righteousness in the world when he can easily and surely land in heaven?

Having discussed the role that hope plays in human life, it is relevant to highlight before concluding the

decisive role in the nurturing of either hope or despair in a man's personality. Finally, one's skill-set also makes one adopt a hopeful or hopeless approach in life; where a skilled person is more confident of making his way in the face of predicaments, an unskilled person is more likely to be engulfed by disappointment and despair. Conclusively, hope is definitely the greatest driving force in human life; the manifestations of it are easily traceable in everyone's day-to-day activities. From the political sector to social and economic affairs, this is hope that keeps things in motion and does not let stagnation rule the situation. However, it is also a fact that there are a few such circumstances where hope, instead of promoting action and activity, encourages inactivity and lethargy. At the same time, it is also a reality that the presence and extent of hope depend upon a multitude of factors that include knowledge

How to Write Literary Essays

1. Comprehend the topic statement

Read the topic statement again and again and comprehend it in all its bearing.

2. Write outline smartly

Prepare outline of the essay just the way you would do for other types of essays. However, instead of focusing on causes, impacts and recommendations, forward more and more arguments in favour of the stance that you have taken.

3. Give an impressive introduction

In introductory paragraph, try to make it clear to the examiner that you have fully comprehended the topic and are fully aware of what your stance is going to be. Since examiners go through the introductory paragraph very meticulously, it should be exquisitely crafted using suitable vocabulary and idioms.

4. Present solid arguments

While substantiating your stance, use arguments based on logic as well as historical facts. Every argument should be delineated in a separate paragraph. At the start of these paragraphs, give paragraph statement i.e. narrate what your point is, and then prove it with evidence.

5. Provide quotations and references

Use of quotations, facts and figures and references from sources like books, etc. is always advisable.

6. Use vocabulary wisely

In literary essay, the presentation of arguments is somewhat different from the other types of essays. Selection of words is, therefore, of much more importance in literary essays.

discussion that hope is not a constant and invariable element in human life, and its extent depends on a number of factors.

First of all, man's mental and physical health plays a crucial role in this context. Where a hale and hearty body and mind house optimism, an unhealthy man is more likely to be engulfed by despair and hopelessness. Secondly, man's surroundings also impact his thoughts and behaviour and make him develop either a hopeful or a hopeless approach towards life. It is a common experience, for instance, that many patients start improving in terms of health right from the moment they get discharged from the hospital and shift to their houses. Likewise, past experiences of a person also determine his approach to life. Someone who has had bad experiences can rarely be hopeful and optimistic in their life. Then, knowledge and awareness do also play a

and awareness, education and skill, and the surrounding environment and circumstances. Hope, irrefutably, is not only the greatest driving force but the biggest support of life as well. It keeps things moving when there are a number of impediments on the way and keeps faces smiling when there are a myriad of agonies and sufferings in the surroundings. Nothing can be more relevant to end the discussion than the couplet, which says:

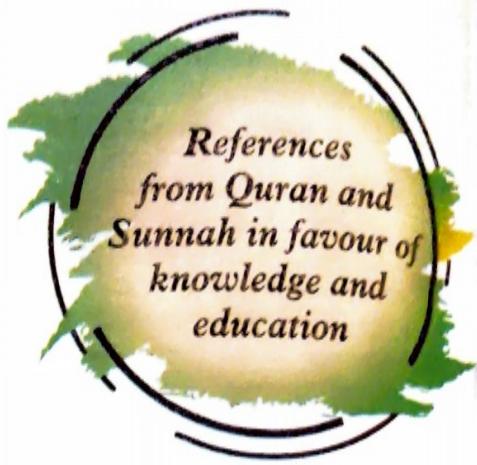
*Dil naumeed to nahi, nakaam hi to hey
Lambi he gham ki sham,
magar sham hi to hey*

The writer, a PAS officer from the 38th CTP, is currently serving as an Additional Secretary in the Government of the Punjab. He can be reached at: asim_raza7950@yahoo.com

Holy Prophet Muhammad *صلوات الله عليه وآله وسلام*

AS Role- Model

FOR AN EDUCATOR



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Muhammad Asim Jasra



Introduction

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) can rightly be called the greatest educator of the whole of mankind and for all times. He (PBUH) successfully taught and spread the message of Allah Almighty. He (PBUH) transformed the crowd of pagans of the Arabian Peninsula into one nation with a common belief system—the belief in the Oneness of Allah Almighty. This happened within a short span of 23 years.

Impact of the teachings imparted by the Holy Prophet (PBUH)

- Introduction of Islam
- Taught Quran
- Teaching through his words (Ahadith) and practical demonstration (Sunnah)
- Emergence of a new world order
- The birth of Islamic civilization
- The course of history was changed

Objectives of Prophethood

"He is the One Who raised for the illiterate people a messenger from among themselves—reciting to them His revelations, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and wisdom, for indeed they had previously been clearly astray." (Surah Al-Jumu'a; 62:2)

In this verse, Allah Almighty stated the following purposes behind sending His beloved prophet (PBUH) to mankind:

- Reciting to them His revelations

- Purifying them

- Teaching them the Book and wisdom

"And recall when Allah took a covenant from the Prophets: 'This is the Book and the Wisdom which I have given you.' (Surah Aal-e-Imran; 3:81)

"(O Muhammad), whenever We raised any Messengers before you, they were no other than human beings; (except that) to them We sent revelation. So ask those who possess knowledge if you do not know." (Surah An-Nahl; 16:43)

The first revelation of the Holy Quran upon the Holy Prophet (PBUH)

The importance of education, learning and knowledge is reflected in the fact that the very first revelation of the Holy Quran was about reading. Following are the first five verses from Surah Al-Alaq (96:1-5).

1. *Read, "O Prophet, in the name of your Lord Who created*

2. *Created humans from a clinging clot.*

3. *Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous,*

4. *Who taught by the pen*

5. *Taught humanity what they knew not*

Verses of the Holy Quran that underpin the importance of knowledge and learning

"Of all of Allah's servants, only the knowledgeable of His might are truly in awe of Him." (Surah Fatir; 35:28)

"Say, O Prophet, "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" None will be mindful of this except people of reason." (Surah Az-Zumar; 39:9)

"And pray, "My Lord! Increase me in knowledge."

(Surah Taha; 20:114)

Ahadith which underpin the importance of knowledge and learning**Narrated Abdullah bin Umar (RA):**

I heard Allah's Messenger (PBUH) saying, "While I was sleeping, I saw that a cup full of milk was brought to me and I drank of it and gave the remaining of it to Umar bin Al-Khattab." They asked, What have you interpreted (about the dream), O Allah's Messenger (PBUH)?" The Prophet (PBUH) said, "(It is religious) knowledge." (Sahih al-Bukhari: 7032)

Narrated Ibn Mas'ud:

"I heard the Prophet (PBUH) saying, "There is no envy except in two: a person who God has given wealth and he spends it in the right way, and a person whom Allah has given wisdom (i.e. religious knowledge) and he gives His decisions accordingly and teaches it to the others."

- Ukaz Fair has been regarded by historians as a literary festival.

- Poets were given special recognition in the Arab world.

- Certain elementary schools existed.

Steps taken by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) for the cause of education

- After migration to Medina, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) made mosques the centers of learning.
- Mosques were used as centers of learning as well as places for worship.
- The most significant among Mosque schools is that of Quba.
- Women's education was also focused on.

Ashab al-Suffah

- Suffah was a raised platform on the rear side of Masjid-e-Nabvi.



(Sahih al-Bukhari: 1409)

Narrated Ibn Mas'ud:

"The Prophet (PBUH) used to take care of us in preaching by selecting a suitable time, so that we might not get bored. (He abstained from pestering us with sermons and knowledge all the time)." (Sahih al-Bukhari: 68)

Some other traditions

- "Acquisition of knowledge is incumbent upon all Muslims, men and women."
- "The best among you is the one who learns and teaches Quran."
- "The ink of the scholar is holier than the blood of the martyrs."
- "He who leaves his home in search of knowledge walks in the path of Allah."

Education in the pre-Islamic era

- It was not systematic and formal; it was for poetry contests.

- More than 80 companions (Sahaba) of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) dedicated their lives to the cause of learning the knowledge of the Holy Quran and Sunnah. They are called Ashab al-Suffah.
- The Holy Prophet (PBUH) taught them daily.

Syllabi/Areas of education

- Knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah
- Character building
- Morality and ethics
- Knowledge of right and wrong
- Fundamental principles
- The art of reading and writing
- Islamic law
- Study of foreign languages for the purpose of diplomacy
 - Hazrat Zayd bin Thabit (RA) knew Persian, Greek and Hebrew
 - Hazrat Abdullah bin Zubair (RA) knew

several foreign languages

Option given to the prisoners of Badr

- The Holy Prophet (PBUH) gave the literate prisoners of Badr the option to teach ten children for their release.
- In that case, they were exempted from the payment of 4000 dirhams per person in order to secure their release.
- This is again an indication of how much importance the Holy Prophet (PBUH) attached to the cause of knowledge and literacy.

Mastery over different dialects of the Arabic language

- This mastery made him a great communicator and educator.
- It has been narrated about the Holy Prophet (PBUH):
- "... [He (PBUH)] spoke in such a way that if one were to count his words, they could be counted."

The Quran encourages pondering and meaningful thinking

- There are many references in the Quran and Sunnah that encourage human beings to think, ponder and apply their minds.
- This forms the basis of knowledge and education.
- The Holy Prophet (PBUH) prayed for the attainment of useful knowledge.

"Do they not then reflect on the Quran?

Or are there locks upon their hearts?"

(Surah Muhammad; 47:24)

"Invite all to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and kind advice, and only debate with them in the best manner. Surely, your Lord alone knows best who has strayed from His way and who is rightly guided." (Surah An-Nahl; 16:125)

Quran and anthropology

- Real stories of different nations that passed
- Study of human history
- The names of different prophets of Allah have been mentioned
- Knowledge about the creation of mankind
- Birth of human beings (Surah Al-Alaq)

Knowledge about the creation of human beings

- It is He who created you in different stages.* (Surah Nuh; 71:14)
- Who created you, fashioned you, and perfected your design.* (Surah Al-Infatir; 82:7)
- They were created from a spurting fluid stemming*

from between the backbone and the ribcage.

(Surah At-Tariq; 86:6-7)

Allah is the creator of life

"And Allah has created from water every living creature. Some of them crawl on their bellies, some walk on two legs, and some walk on four. Allah creates whatever He wills. Surely, Allah is Most Capable of everything." (Surah An-Nur; 24:45)

Pure milk

"And there is certainly a lesson for you in cattle: We give you to drink of what is in their bellies, from between digested food and blood: pure milk, pleasant to drink." (Surah An-Nahl; 16:66)

Natural phenomena

"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth; the alternation of the day and the night; the ships that sail the sea for the benefit of humanity; the rain sent down by Allah from the skies, reviving the earth after its death; the scattering of all kinds of creatures throughout; the shifting of the winds; and the clouds drifting between the heavens and the earth—in all of this are surely signs for people of understanding." (Surah Al-Baqarah; 2:164)

"Or ask them, "Who made the earth a place of settlement, caused rivers to flow through it, placed firm mountains upon it, and set a barrier between fresh and salt bodies of water? Was it another god besides Allah?"

Absolutely not! But most of them do not know." (Surah An-Naml; 27:61)

Reference to agriculture

"He is the One Who sends down rain from the sky, from which you drink and by which plants grow for your cattle to graze. With it He produces for you various crops, olives, palm trees, grapevines, and every type of fruit. Surely in this is a sign for those who reflect." (Surah An-Nahl; 16:10-11)

Knowledge of the Universe

"Do the disbelievers not realize that the heavens and earth were once one mass then We split them apart? And We created from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?" (Surah Al-Anbia; 21:30)

"Then He turned towards the heaven when it was still like smoke, saying to it and to the earth, 'Submit, willingly or unwillingly.' They both responded, 'We submit willingly.' (Surah Fussilat; 41:11)

"So He formed the heavens into seven heavens in two days, assigning to each its mandate. And We adorned the lowest heaven with stars like lamps for beauty and protection. That is the design of the Almighty, All-



Knowing."(Surah Fussilat; 41:12)

Divine Wisdom

"Have We not smoothed out the earth like a bed and made the mountains as its pegs, and created you in pairs, and made your sleep for rest, and made the night a cover, and made the day for livelihood, and built above you seven mighty heavens. and placed in them a shining lamp, and sent down from rainclouds, pouring water, producing by it grain and various plants and dense orchards?"

(Surah An-Naba; 78: 6-16)

"Do they not ever reflect on camels—how they were masterfully created; and the sky—how it was raised high and the mountains—how they were firmly set up; and the earth—how it was levelled out? So, continue to remind all, O Prophet, for your duty is only to remind."

(Surah Al-Ghashiyah; 88:17-21)

"He created the heavens without pillars—as you can see—and placed firm mountains upon the earth so it does not shake with you, and scattered throughout it all types of creatures. And We send down rain from the sky, causing every type of fine plant to grow on earth."

(Surah Luqman; 31:10)

Purpose of mountains

Mountains are the pegs of the earth. In this way, the earth has been fixed.

"and made the mountains as its pegs." (Surah An-Naba; 78:7)

"and the mountains—how they were firmly set up."

(Surah Al-Ghashiyah; 88:19)

"He created the heavens without pillars—as you can see—and placed firm mountains upon the earth so it does not shake with you, and scattered throughout it all types of creatures. And We send down rain from the sky, causing every type of fine plant to grow on earth."

(Surah Luqman; 31:10)

Conclusion

To conclude, it is stated that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) enriched the whole of mankind with divine knowledge and guidance without any distinction. It is a miracle that the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH), who himself was untutored and unlettered, became a model for educators. This shows that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) imparted only divine guidance. ☐

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The Empire of the Caliphs seems to have been the first state under which the world enjoyed that degree of tranquility which the cultivation of the sciences requires. It was under the protection of those generous and magnificent princes, that the ancient philosophy and astronomy of the Greeks were restored and established in the East; that tranquility, which their mild, just and religious government diffused over their vast empire, revived the curiosity of mankind, to inquire into the connecting principles of nature.

Adam Smith



Over the span of 23 years, the Prophet ﷺ successfully designed a model generation whose likes humanity had never seen. This was a group isolated from the world by a vast desert, politically weak, and largely illiterate. But within two decades, they revolutionized the culture they lived in and laid the basis for an empire that would last for over a millennium.

How did this revolution happen?

By accepting Islam, the companions of Muhammad ﷺ and subsequent generations of Muslims made a few key



1. They abandoned harmful cultural practices.



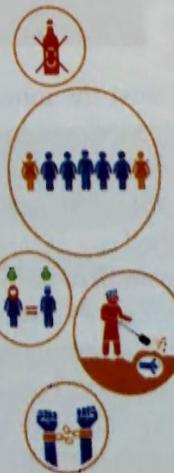
2. They embodied their beliefs by giving in charity, fighting for just causes, and dedicating their lives to helping others.



3. They overcame petty tribal prejudices that caused frequent wars in pre-Islamic Arabia.



4. They encouraged the Islamic practices of education, scientific inquiry, social justice and equality, and more.



But even putting civilizational merits aside, focusing solely on the Prophet's ﷺ lifetime reveals drastic cultural changes that haven't been replicated elsewhere.

Has history ever known anyone else with the ability to **wean a nation from alcoholism**? The Prophet ﷺ achieved that within his lifetime in a people whose glory and income was interlocked with wine.

Has anyone else ever been able to ban the age-old customs of **unrestricted polygyny, male-only inheritance laws, and female infanticide** in less than a decade?

Has there ever been another era where **systemic racism was eradicated** in both theory and practice? Many of the Prophet's ﷺ contemporaries who were Arab supremacists ultimately became people who accepted being subordinates of non-Arabs and former slaves.

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THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL



Termed the domestic sphere and family sphere, the personal sphere was intended for autonomous personal decisions and devoid of political entanglements. Consequently, a patriarchal mindset took root, systematically marginalizing half of the population, i.e. women. With deregulation, men assumed a dominant role in this sphere, precipitating discrimination, oppression and subordination. During the second wave of feminism, numerous outspoken feminists vehemently protested against the inherent inequalities, hierarchies and dominance within the personal sphere, thus rendering it inherently political. They contested the prevailing power dynamics, division of labour and gender-based socialization within this realm. Likewise, the imposition of individual wills and internal constraints within this sphere rendered it a focal point of political contention. Consequently, the traditional demarcation between the personal and political realms was challenged by feminists striving to institute regulation and reform. This article will explore the notion that the personal sphere is inherently political, while also recognizing

Since the dawn of society, institutions such as religion and government have delineated society into two overarching realms: the personal sphere and the political or public sphere. The public sphere emerged as the most regulated domain through legislation by these institutions, while the personal sphere remained largely neglected for long.

Yasir Ghafoor Khan

the necessity of maintaining a discernible boundary between the two spheres.

First and foremost, power, a defining attribute of politics, can indeed permeate the family structure, rendering the personal sphere intrinsically political. Power, defined as the capacity to influence decisions and behaviour, can manifest in its most egregious form as physical violence. Within the confines of the domestic sphere, power dynamics are evident in relationships between spouses and between parents and children. Feminist discourse posits

that any relationship characterized by power differentials is inherently political, irrespective of its occurrence within the domestic domain. Looking back, power dynamics were often regarded as natural and unremarkable, with instances of domestic violence being tacitly accepted by society. However, governmental intervention became imperative to enact legislative measures such as the Domestic Violence Act. Consequently, the presence of power is not confined solely to the political sphere but also extends into the domestic sphere. Moreover, the divisions within these spheres are delineated by political will, thus imbuing them with inherent political significance.

cance. The domestic sphere itself is a product of the political sphere, which is the rationale behind considering the personal sphere inherently political. Susan Moller Okin, a renowned author, asserted in her book "Justice, Gender and the Family" that the division between society's public and private spheres stems from a political decision. This implies that the existence of the domestic sphere hinges on political determinations, thereby reinforcing the argument that the personal sphere is indeed political. For example, although marriage is a personal endeavour, its regulation is governed by laws enacted by the government. Similarly, the harrowing experiences of marginalized women find expression primarily within the political sphere. In essence, the demarcation between these spheres serves as evidence that the family is not apolitical, and early gender socialization also occurs within the domestic sphere.

Domestic life serves as the primary arena for our early socialization, underscoring the need for political regulation. The family stands as the genesis of gender socialization, playing a pivotal role in individual development. Gender socialization forms an integral part of nurturing, instilling feminine traits like shyness and emotions in girls, and masculine traits like strength and aggressiveness in boys. Consequently, gender socialization perpetuates gender discrimination. Renowned feminist writer Simone De Beauvoir, in her seminal work "The Second Sex," famously articulated: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." She elucidated that social discrimination moulds a woman's moral and intellectual being so profoundly that these attributes seem inherent. It becomes evident that the personal sphere warrants political regulation due to gender socialization and the societal division of labour.

The division of labour within most families erects mental as well as material barriers against women in all other spheres, thereby rendering the personal sphere a political sphere. Eminent writer Friedrich Engels, in his book "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" (1884), explains that with the advent of capitalism, society became patriarchal as mother rights were overthrown and factories became centres of production. Work was divided into two basic categories: domestic work, which remained



unpaid and outside work, which was paid with lump-sum money. Domestic work, predominantly shouldered by women, led to their subordination to men. Women concentrated their efforts in the domestic sphere, engaging in tasks such as childbearing and family care. This not only created a mental barrier due to the energy invested in domestic work but also a material barrier due to the lack of economic resources. Consequently, this profound imbalance has contributed to women lagging behind in politics, business, government and the judiciary. The deregulation of the domestic sector, from a socialistic perspective, creates "the slave of the slave."

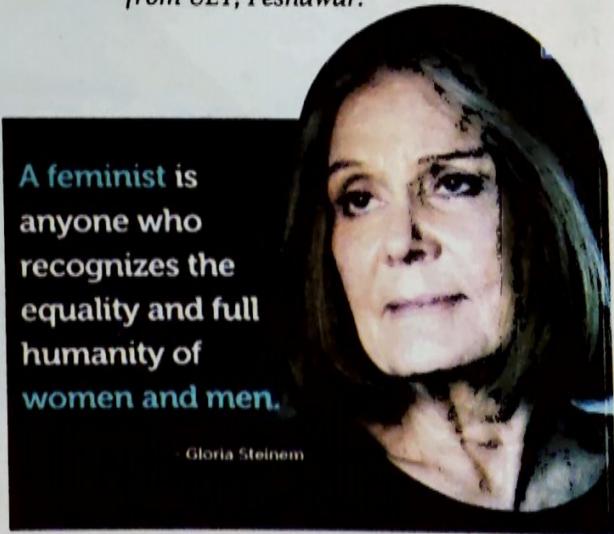
Many theories have brought surprises, both positive and negative, when attempts were made to put them into practice, much like the concept that the personal is political.

Similarly, this doesn't imply the abolishment of the family; rather, it signifies women's desire to democratize the family sphere and bring it within the realm of justice. Furthermore, the right to privacy is a fundamental individual right, so the boundary between these spheres should not be blurred but rather clearly defined. It is essential for the government to consider the sensitivity of this boundary. When regulating the personal sphere, social systems such as the family and privacy must be taken into careful consideration. Only through the insights of wise scholars and politicians can the domestic sphere be effectively regulated, lest it lead to more devastating consequences. ■

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A feminist is anyone who recognizes the equality and full humanity of women and men.

- Gloria Steinem



Pakistan is a diverse and culturally rich country. Thanks to its historical, geographical and ethnic diversity, Pakistan's culture is a melting pot of Indian, Persian, Afghan, Central Asian, South Asian and Western Asian influences. With a population comprising numerous ethnicities, languages, religions and traditions, the country's cultural landscape is a tapestry of identities and histories. The instant article aims to explore the vibrant world of cultural diversity in Pakistan, exploring its various facets, historical context, challenges and the enduring spirit of coexistence.

Pakistan, with its roots deeply embedded in the ancient civilizations of the Indus Valley, stands as a vibrant mosaic, intricately woven from the diverse strands of history, ethnicity and faith. Over centuries, its fertile plains and rugged mountains have been witness to migrations, invasions and cultural exchanges, resulting in a unique convergence of influences that define its rich tapestry today. Understanding the dynamic phenomenon of cultural fusion in Pakistan is essential for comprehending its myriad manifestations across various aspects of life and its profound impact on national identity.

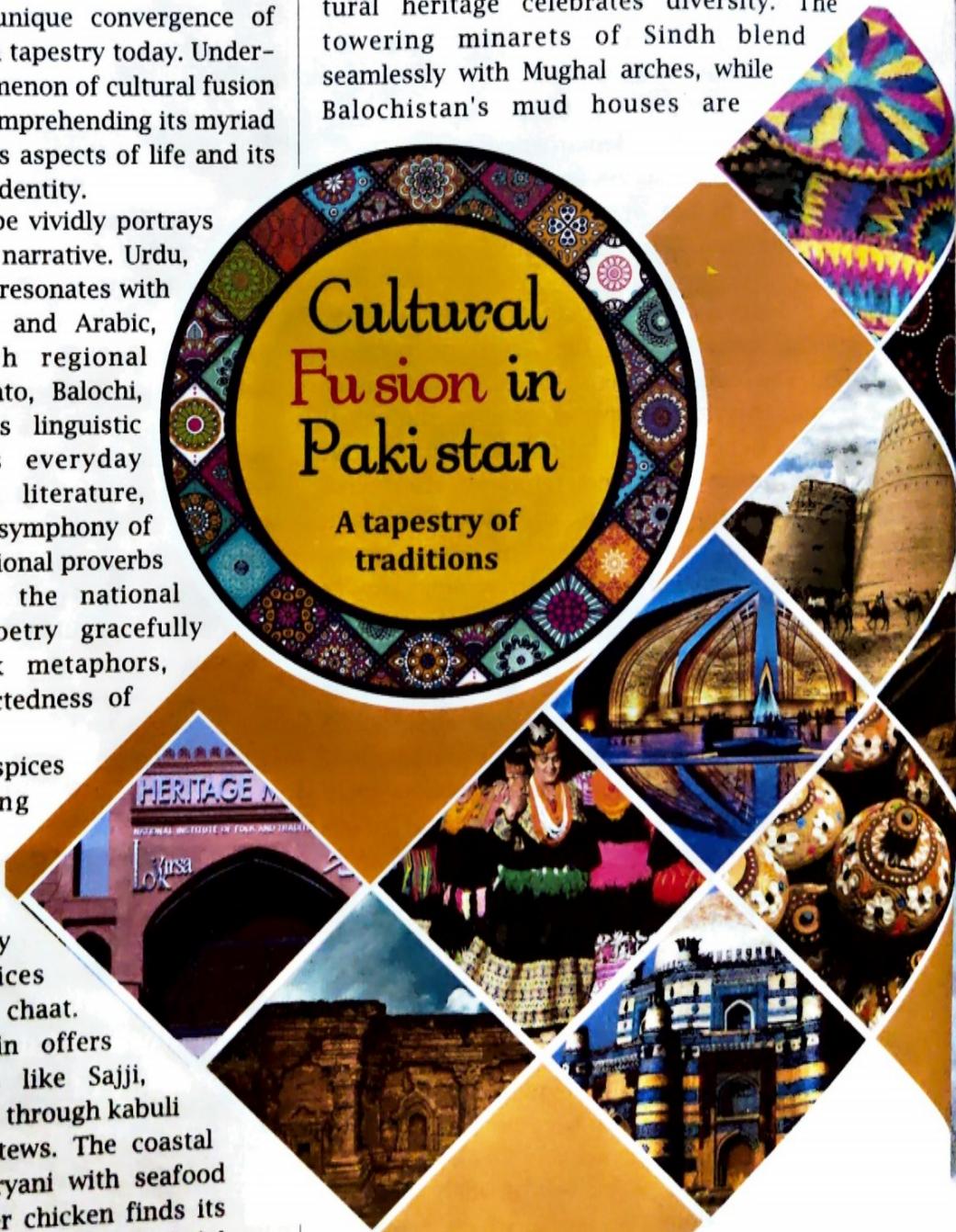
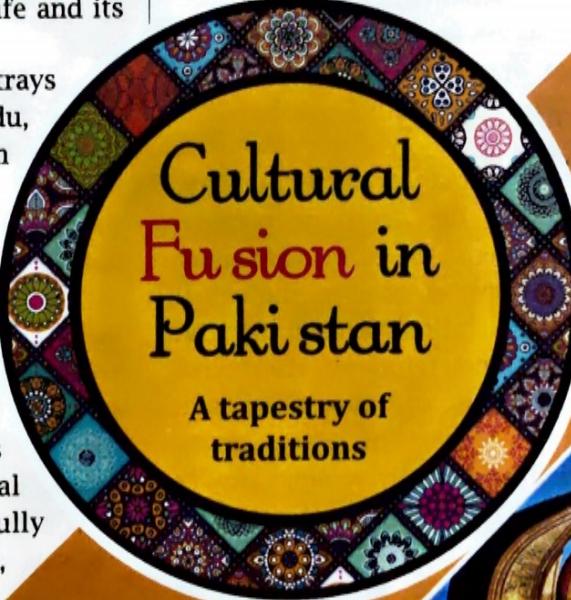
Pakistan's linguistic landscape vividly portrays the country's rich historical narrative. Urdu, serving as the lingua franca, resonates with echoes of Persian, Punjabi and Arabic, seamlessly blending with regional languages like Sindhi, Pashto, Balochi, Seraiki and Kashmiri. This linguistic amalgamation permeates everyday conversations, music and literature, orchestrating a harmonious symphony of sounds and expressions. Regional proverbs seamlessly integrate into the national discourse, while Urdu poetry gracefully incorporates Punjabi folk metaphors, highlighting the interconnectedness of these linguistic threads.

The tantalizing aroma of spices drifting through bustling bazaars narrates a story of culinary fusion. Mughal influences linger in sumptuous biryanis and creamy kormas, while Sindhi spices impart a fiery touch to chaat. Balochistan's rugged terrain offers hearty, meat-based dishes like Sajji, reflecting Pashtun hospitality through kabuli pulao and aromatic lamb stews. The coastal flavours of Sindh infuse biryani with seafood delights, while Punjabi butter chicken finds its way onto tables across the nation. This delightful

Dr. Muhammad Anwar Farooq

fusion not only satiates the palate but also fosters connections among communities through shared culinary experiences and traditions.

From the majestic Shalimar Gardens of Lahore, inspired by the Mughals, to the intricately carved wooden mosques of Hunza, Pakistan's architectural heritage celebrates diversity. The towering minarets of Sindh blend seamlessly with Mughal arches, while Balochistan's mud houses are



adorned with intricate Sindhi geometric patterns. Sufi shrines serve as a testament to the fusion of Persian and Indo-Islamic artistry, while vibrant truck art blends regional motifs with modern influences. Pakistani artists draw inspiration from this confluence, creating masterpieces that reflect the multifaceted beauty of their homeland.

The rhythmic beats of dhol drums intertwine with the soulful melodies of qawwali at Sufi shrines, while Punjabi bhangra merges with Sindhi dholak rhythms at joyous celebrations. Classical Pakistani music showcases diverse instruments like the sitar, tabla and sarangi, each embodying the unique musical traditions of different regions. The graceful movements of Sindhi dance seamlessly blend with the energetic spirit of Punjabi bhangra, creating a mesmerizing spectacle that transcends regional boundaries.

No doubt, Pakistan's cultural fusion results in a rich tapestry of traditions, languages, cuisines and arts. This diversity enhances the country's cultural landscape and provides a platform for mutual understanding and appreciation among different communities. The fusion of various cultures fosters tolerance and harmony among different ethnic and religious groups. It promotes acceptance of differences and encourages coexistence, contributing to social cohesion and stability. Pakistan's cultural fusion facilitates exchanges between diverse communities, both within the country and with other nations. This exchange of ideas, traditions and values promotes cross-cultural understanding and strengthens diplomatic ties. Cultural fusion can create economic opportunities through tourism, cultural industries and international collaborations. Pakistan's diverse cultural heritage has the potential to attract tourists and investors interested in experiencing and supporting its unique cultural offerings. Embracing cultural fusion fosters resilience and adaptability in society. It enables communities to navigate social changes, economic shifts and geopolitical challenges by

drawing on the strengths of various cultural traditions and practices.

While cultural fusion in Pakistan offers numerous benefits, it also presents several challenges. One challenge is the preservation of cultural identities amidst fusion. Rapid globalization and urbanization can lead to the erosion of traditional practices and languages, causing concerns about cultural homogenization and the loss of heritage. Balancing cultural diversity with social cohesion can be challenging. Ethnic, linguistic and religious differences may sometimes lead to social tensions, particularly in areas where cultural fusion is perceived as a threat to traditional values or identities. Differences in cultural norms, values, and beliefs can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts, especially in multicultural settings.

Cultural fusion requires efforts to promote intercultural dialogue, empathy, and respect to mitigate such conflicts.

While globalization facilitates cultural exchange, it also introduces dominant cultural norms and practices that may overshadow or diminish local traditions. This can challenge the authenticity and integrity of cultural expressions.

Despite these challenges, cultural fusion remains a defining characteristic of Pakistani society. It fosters understanding, enriches our collective

experience and fuels innovation. As Pakistan emerges on the global stage, its unique cultural fabric becomes a source of strength and identity, reminding us that unity can be found in diversity and that beauty emerges from the harmonious blending of different threads. While challenges exist, embracing cultural fusion remains integral to Pakistan's identity and resilience. By celebrating its rich heritage and navigating challenges with sensitivity, Pakistan continues to weave a vibrant future, one thread at a time. ■

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Framing the Media's Role in *Taliban and Women*

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Who Shapes the Story?

Amna Hashmi

There is a saying that "the loudest voices often drown out the quiet truths." This is especially relevant in light of the events surrounding the conflict in Kashmir. As evidenced by their behaviour in diplomatic practices and lack of collaboration in SAARC and other bilateral or multilateral regional blocs, Pakistan and India have been at each other's throats. They continue to use the conflict for political purposes, but the true problem—the misery of the Kashmiris—remains. Similarly, there are grounds to think that the problem of the subjugation of Afghans—particularly women—at the hands of Taliban in Afghanistan is an additional illustration of it. International media has always played a key role in shaping global diplomatic practices by bringing sensationalism to key events to get the desired results. Instances include the Gulf War (1990–91), the War in Iraq (2003), North Korea's nuclear program, the Hong Kong protests (2019–20) and so on, where sensationalism in the media created a more horrific image than that in reality, which, in turn, influenced decisions about foreign policy that favoured certain factions. Let's shift the focus to how the Taliban is perceived in relation to women:

There is no doubt that the injustices and mistreatment women 'apparently' endure in the name of Islam, but what stands out more in international media coverage is the emphasis on repression and strictness. When the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan in 2021, international news outlets

called out and highlighted the re-imposition of a strict dress code for women, including wearing a 'proper hijab', and punishing their male relatives if not observed. The following coverage focused on the stark regression in women's rights and freedoms, and highlighted extreme examples and dramatic images. While these stories raised global concerns, they often overshadowed the complex and varied experiences of Afghan women while ignoring the fact that most of them obse

The treatment of women by the Taliban has historically been a subject of concern and condemnation by human rights organizations and the international community. Although Taliban's treatment of women has often been characterized by severe restrictions on their rights and freedoms, as well as systematic discrimination and violence, the international media has been biased in its reporting regarding this issue. In the following write-up, the author has tried to highlight this bias and has stressed objective and unbiased reporting of the issue to know the real situation in war-ravaged Afghanistan.

reinforce stereotypes and paint a monochromatic picture, which oversimplifies the experiences of Afghan women and ignores the broader concept. Cultural biases have also influenced media portrayals by emphasizing differences between Western and Afghan cultures. Stories focusing on the perceived backwardness of Taliban practices compared to Western standards have been floating while overlooking local nuances and the agency of Afghan women. This approach can again obscure the broader social and political contexts in which these practices occur, and oversimplify the experiences of Afghan women. Shadi Hamid, an American author and political scientist, quotes in one of his research articles: "The United States never understood Afghanistan". American planners thought they knew what the country needed, which was not quite the same as what its people wanted. American policy was guided by fantasies; chief among them was the idea that the Taliban could be eliminated and the whole culture could be eliminated in the process." International writers, in particular, wield significant influence in forming narratives that often become the lens through which the world views this complex dynamic. Their storytelling choices and framing can have far-reaching consequences that impact not only public opinion but also global policy decisions.

Works like "A Thousand Splendid Suns" by

Khaled Hosseini, "The Bookseller of

Kabul" by Asne Seierstad and "When

the Moon is Low" by Nadia Hashimi,

are examples of such literature

that has shaped the perceptions

of the West regarding the

Taliban, Afghanistan and its

women. Coverages like that

may align with the foreign

policy interests of certain

nations, which are looking to

justify military intervention

or support for particular

political agendas. An

instance of this is the 2001

US military action in Afghani-

stan, which was justified by a

mixture of the aftermath of

9/11, media representations

of the Taliban's abuse of

women and their harbouring

of al-Qaeda. This way, by

highlighting the Taliban's oppressive practices, international media can elicit support for interventionist policies and create narratives that serve the strategic goals of foreign powers.

Then, whose voice is actually missing in this narrative?

Too often, it is the voice of Afghan women themselves.

Their perspectives, experiences and stories are

frequently overshadowed by international interpretations.

They, just like other non-Afghan women, might

have experienced persecution in their own homes, at

the hands of their own relatives, or from a host of other

issues unique to being a woman. When Afghan women

speak out, their narratives can offer a much-needed

balance, providing nuanced insights into the complexi-

ties of life under the Taliban. These voices will have the

potential to challenge one-dimensional portrayals that

reveal the resilience, resourcefulness and agency of

Afghan women. International writers have this respon-

sibility to present more nuanced and accurate portray-

als of the Taliban's relationship with women, consider-

ing the broader socio-political context of their report-

ing. Ethical storytelling demands a commitment to

balance, ensuring that the narrative does not ignite

more stereotypes or serve narrow interests.

The international media's framing of the Taliban and

their relationship with women bears striking simili-

ties to the way the Kashmir issue is portrayed on the

global forum. In both cases, the narratives are often

dictated by the geopolitical interests and

rivalries of other countries rather than the

lived experiences of the people who are

directly affected. The questions that

pop into every mind are: How does

the global focus on power strug-

gles and territorial disputes

obscure the human cost of these

long-standing conflicts? If

international writers and

media outlets continue to

amplify external perspectives

over the actual stories of

those living in these circum-

stances, can we truly say we

understand the reality on the

ground? □

The writer is currently pursuing an MPhil in International Relations from Kinnaird College for Women, Lahore.



Pakistani Feminism

The Biggest Enemy of a Woman is Woman

Academic communities in Third World countries, especially in Pakistan, have a tendency to blindly rely on applying, analyzing and interpreting Western theories in almost all domains of knowledge. A vast majority of academics feel proud of Western knowledge rather than focusing on generating theoretical frameworks that embody our own socio-cultural fabric. The abusive and exploitative colonial policies have not only eroded our intellectual capacity but have also played havoc with our knowledge systems. The colonial knowledge-production apparatus propagated that South Asian people and communities are inferior in socio-cultural and political realms and possess no wisdom to make knowledge systems. There is a dire need to deconstruct such perceptions and narratives so as to generate and produce new knowledge that revolves around our own realities. Feminism is one of the greatest concerns of our era. It is a socio-political movement that focuses on bringing gender equality. But we always try to equate Western feminist concepts and practices with the issues and problems that stem from 'our' socio-cultural landscape. Only by focusing on 'our' problems can we carve out amicable frameworks and solutions that can

A woman can be mean to another woman, as they often vie to destroy each other, especially owing to the currents of meanness and negativity emanating from the other side. It is due to their "intense, sinister underbelly, characterized by intra-female incivility and insidious, gratuitous negativity," as a study points out, that the statement "a woman is an enemy to another woman" seems true as it reflects a common stereotype that suggests women inherently compete with, and undermine, each other. In the following write-up, the author has tried to explore this notion in the light of our own socio-cultural settings.

Iqra Riaz Ud Din lead us towards women's empowerment in the true sense.

Many South Asian feminists have tried to generate new epistemologies that only focus on creating spaces for women in the political, social and economic realms. These frameworks keep propagating that only patriarchal agency is a constraint in the way of women's empowerment, e.g as argued by Ania Loomba and Ritty A. Lukose (2012) in their book "South Asian Feminisms".

Patriarchy is a system where power and authority are vested in men and they use these to subjugate women. Similarly, an essay written by Amina Jamal titled "Global Discourses, Situated Traditions and Muslim Women's Agency in Pakistan" also corroborates this assertion. In this essay, the author reflects on the activism of Muslim women against patriarchal practices. She also discusses a counter-narrative that accentuates that conservative Muslim women can be referred to as 'Muslim

Feminists' who are against the 'Secular Feminist Movements' or 'Western Feminist Movements'. These South Asian feminist frameworks offer insights into the struggle of women in social, political and religious aspects under the lens of patriarchy.

Women and socialization in Pakistan

There is no denying that male-dominated systems have institutionalized gender hierarchies in every field of life - be it economic, political and cultural domains. On the other hand, there is a dire need to recognize and accept another phenomenon where "Women go against Women". In our socio-cultural settings, a woman is the biggest enemy of a woman. This statement is complex,





as it shows profound and deep-seated societal intricacies that are entrenched in both systems, i.e. patriarchal and matriarchal. Matriarchy is a socio-cultural system where women hold power in decision-making. This system is not something alien to our heterogeneous society. For example, in many Punjabi families, women are considered and revered for making important decisions. Similar norms are practised in Pushtoon families. However, this example does not negate the fact that in our socio-cultural settings, women are oppressed and pressured to accept the decisions of men against their will. The foremost agency that plays an important role in our socialization is our relationships, i.e. family and peer groups, and then come other institutions, such as economic, political, etc.

Women and family institutions in Pakistan

In our society as well as in religion, women are given an obligation to raise their children, though it does not free men (fathers) from their responsibilities - they are equally required in this process. In matriarchal families in Pakistan, females hold the power to make important decisions, whereas male members remain busy with economic activities. In such families, "mother" is a central figure who demands the utmost respect and esteem from children. In the context of daughters-in-law, the "mother" wants to see them as subordinate. This "mother" does not want her son to give equal respect to his wife. In this envy and jealousy, the "mother" creates misunderstandings and issues that can spoil the spouses' relationship. In this scenario, one woman is the enemy of another woman. But how is patriarchy responsible for this phenomenon?

The "mother" is empowered here to make decisions for the family, so why is she creating cleavages? Some may say that the "mother" must be uneducated, but that is not the case. This phenomenon is prevalent even among the elite class in Pakistan. Similar examples can be found in the context of sisters-in-law and even wives. These sentiments of jealousy and envy

are giving birth to insecurities, competition and whatnot! This phenomenon happens equally in the extended family and the nuclear family.

Women and peer groups or peer networks in Pakistan

Another agency of socialization is peer groups or peer networks. People make such groups in educational institutions such as schools, colleges, universities and, in contemporary times, even on social media. This group or network, I must say, can be one of the most toxic. The main objective of these groups is to provide strong social bonding that is built on trust, mutual respect and sincerity. This institute comes after the institution of family where you learn to shape identities, seek validation and support and increase social capital. These groups are those which are most trusted by an individual after family, sometimes even dearer than family. However, women do not leave a chance to play their manoeuvrings on other women. Such as, within a close-knit circle of female friends, one or more members may purposefully keep others out of social events or activities in order to establish their dominance and marginalize those whom they view as competitors or threats. Similarly, in order to damage one another's reputations, cause strife or obtain influence in social situations, female companions may gossip or circulate false information about one another. Within the circle, this may undermine trust and cause relationships to break down. Furthermore, there is frequently a covert or overt rivalry for dominance and leadership positions within female friendship circles. This competition takes the form of different actions meant to gain control, attention and approval from other members of the group. People may compete for attention by voicing their preferences or ideas and using subtle tactics to affect the dynamics and activities of the group. Some, on the other hand, choose a more deceptive strategy, hoping to influence others' actions and choices in order to elevate themselves. In order to



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keep control, this manipulation may entail strategies like guilt-tripping, emotional manipulation or taking advantage of vulnerabilities. Some friends undermine or criticize others instead of providing true support, with the intention of undermining their confidence or accomplishments. These actions are frequently motivated by feelings of insecurity, jealousy or a need to establish control within the friendship group. Under these circumstances, friendships become battlefields where prestige and self-interest trump sincere support and companionship. The most toxic and dangerous tactic used by women in such groups is gaslighting - a method used by female friends to subtly manipulate one another in an effort to cause the victim to question her own reality. The gaslighter

Women and economic institutions in Pakistan
Women are playing very effective and efficient roles in economic activities in our society. Indulging in economic activities is essential for women's empowerment as it gives them independence. There are women who acquire employment to support their families, but there are also women who do it for passion. Even some women uphold the rhetoric of women's financial empowerment but rely on their husbands for financial security. Organizations, institutions and agencies are not free from politicization. Unfortunately, women employers and women employees play a stronger role in organizational politics. Women employers and employees, through many strategies, try to undermine



progressively undermines the victim's confidence by beginning with little lies or distortions and then employing invalidation and denial to make her observations seem false. The victim may eventually start to doubt her sanity and grow reliant on the gaslighter for approval. In the meantime, by ignoring the victim's worries, other individuals inside the friendship circle could unintentionally encourage the conduct. Gaslighting can have a significant negative impact on a victim's mental and emotional health, causing disorientation, insecurity and trust issues. Breaking free from gaslighting in female friendships requires recognizing the manipulation, asking for help and establishing boundaries. This is not true for every peer group but usually happens these days.

the role of other women in an organization, such as through gossiping, forming alliances and playing stereotypes. Typical and traditional female employers and employees have ingrained hatred and biases against other women. They do not want to see other women grow and succeed, mainly because of their own insecurities. Women do not believe in their abilities and capabilities and thus engage themselves in such toxic and negative behaviours. For example, for a promotion, two women working in the same department could compete. Rather than publicly bolstering one another, they may resort to subtly damaging each other's prospects, such as gossiping or downplaying each other's achievements. Moreover, in an organization, a few women may band together as a

close-knit clique to protect their jobs. They might prevent other women from attending crucial social gatherings, which would restrict their chances of progress. There are instances where a woman holding a managerial position micro-manages her female subordinates by continuously scrutinizing their choices and going beyond acceptable limits. This conduct has the potential to erode subordinates' confidence and sense of autonomy while also fostering a hostile work environment. Nonetheless, this can also be a result of organizational culture because micro-managing, in our society, is the most established managerial practice. Critics would raise the point that women do this against other women because they are struggling to acquire better resources. According to a report published by the University of Michigan in 2015, the women who reach higher hierarchies in an organization tend to restrict the way of junior female colleagues, thus hindering the progress of other women. These women even tend to discourage and dishearten the growth mindset of young female colleagues. This equally happens in every organization, institute and agency in Pakistan, be it state-owned, government or private.

Synthesis

Why is such an embedded and inherited hatred and resentment there? Is this also entrenched by patriarchy? When men hate women, it is called "misogyny," but what term can be used here when one woman hates another woman? I do not think "internalized misogyny" is an appropriate word. Pakistani women have toxic sentiments and behaviours towards other women, obviously, I am not referring to all women, but most. Do not blame that only patriarchy is responsible for such behaviours; women of such kind need to rethink and restructure their behaviours for

a greater positive change. What is Pakistani feminism? I argue that Pakistani Feminism is a feminism that not only advocates fighting against patriarchal dominance but also against other "women," which is creating

hurdles and constraints in achieving equal rights in every realm. There is a need to reflect more profoundly in order to form a theoretical framework on this issue.

In the meantime, Pakistani women need to understand that they can be a source of strength and support for other women through developing empathy, mentoring, fighting for gender equality, creating safe places, encouraging collaboration, setting a good example and confronting negative stereotypes. Women may use these behaviours and attitudes to establish solidarity, empower one another, and effect positive change in their communities and beyond. Women can use their collective strength to overcome challenges, confront systemic inequalities and pave the way for a more inclusive and

equitable society in which all women may thrive. □

The writer is an MPhil scholar and Data Science enthusiast.



WORLD REFUGEE DAY



Freedom of decision is the inalienable right of the refugee!

A UN-designated international observation World Refugee Day is celebrated to honour refugees around the globe. The day, which falls each year on June 20, is observed to pay tribute to the strength and courage of people who have been forced to flee their home country to escape conflict or persecution. The day was first established on 20 June 2001, in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.



World Refugee Day is an occasion to build empathy and understanding for the plight of refugees and recognize their resilience in rebuilding their lives.

Who is a refugee?

Refugees are forced migrants, meaning they have not left a place voluntarily or by choice.

The United Nations High Commission on Refugees defines refugees as: "People who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country." The 1951 Refugee Convention describes a refugee as: "Someone unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion."

Reasons for becoming a refugee

As for the reasons behind becoming a refugee, they are many and multifarious.

Conflict might be what first comes to mind when thinking of refugees, as conflict can often create large numbers of refugees in a short period. Insurgency, civil war and conventional wars all often cause large-scale migration. Such examples could be the insurgencies in West Africa, the Syrian Civil War and the Russia-Ukraine War, which have all caused a massive influx of

Dr. Hassaan Bin Zubair

refugees to neighbouring countries.

Moreover, natural disasters and severe political oppression can also cause refugee crisis. Natural disasters are becoming more common due to climate change. Natural disasters, especially floods and droughts, can spur widespread migration as developing countries are unable to cope with more and more inconsistent rainy seasons or more erratic storms. This is especially prevalent in places where a large portion of the population is dependent on subsistence farming for their livelihoods.

Problems faced by refugees

The UNHCR states that 83% of refugees worldwide reside in developing countries. This can limit access to aid, as developing countries may not have the infrastructure needed to accommodate an unplanned or sudden influx of people. This often creates issues as many refugees are unprepared to leave their homes, cannot take all their belongings, and cannot afford to move and live in a new country. This not only often leads to poor quality of life in countries of destination but also creates vulnerability for people to be taken advantage of by bad actors such as human traffickers. While attempting to get to a better destination, human smugglers and kidnappers often take advantage of desperate refugees fleeing conflict or persecution with



little money and supplies. The following are some of the problems faced by refugees:

- ❖ Refugees are not treated well by the residents of the host country.
- ❖ They are considered a burden on the local economy.
- ❖ The local residents feel that refugees are snatching their job opportunities.
- ❖ The refugees are held responsible for spreading diseases and crime, and polluting the area, as they mostly live in slums and tents.
- ❖ They are constrained to do useful and necessary work, but at low wages.
- ❖ Refugees face the problems of shelter, food and lack of employment.
- ❖ Refugees are exempted from the rights that are given by the state to its people, like the right to a minimum standard of living and security.
- ❖ Thus, they are often exploited by the police and other residents on grounds of the rights that they lack as members of that state.

Rights of refugees

Refugees are among the most vulnerable people in the world. The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol help protect them. They are the only global legal instruments explicitly covering the most important aspects of a refugee's life. According to their provisions, refugees deserve, as a minimum, the

same standards of treatment enjoyed by other foreign nationals in a given country and, in many cases, the same treatment as nationals. The 1951 Convention contains several rights and also highlights the obligations of refugees towards their host country. The cornerstone of the 1951 Convention is the principle of non-refoulement. According to this principle, a refugee should not be returned to a country where he or she faces serious threats to his or her life or freedom.

The rights contained in the 1951 Convention include:

- ❖ Right not to be expelled, except under certain, strictly defined conditions
- ❖ Right not to be punished for illegal entry into the territory of a contracting state
- ❖ Right to work
- ❖ Right to housing
- ❖ Right to education
- ❖ Right to public relief and assistance
- ❖ Right to freedom of religion
- ❖ Right to access the courts
- ❖ Right to freedom of movement within the territory
- ❖ Right to be issued identity and travel documents

Conclusion

There can be no real peace in this world as long as hundreds of thousands of men, women and children, through no fault of their own but only because they sacrifice all they possessed for the sake of what they believed, remain in camps and live in misery and the greatest uncertainty of their future. Eventually, if we wait too long, the uprooted are bound to become easy prey for political adventurers, from whom the world has suffered too much already. Before anything of that sort happens, let us join hands in an all-out effort to solve their problem. ■

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Refugees

A refugee is someone who fled his or her home and country owing to a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, according to the United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention. Many refugees are in exile to escape the effects of natural or human-made disasters.

Internally Displaced Persons

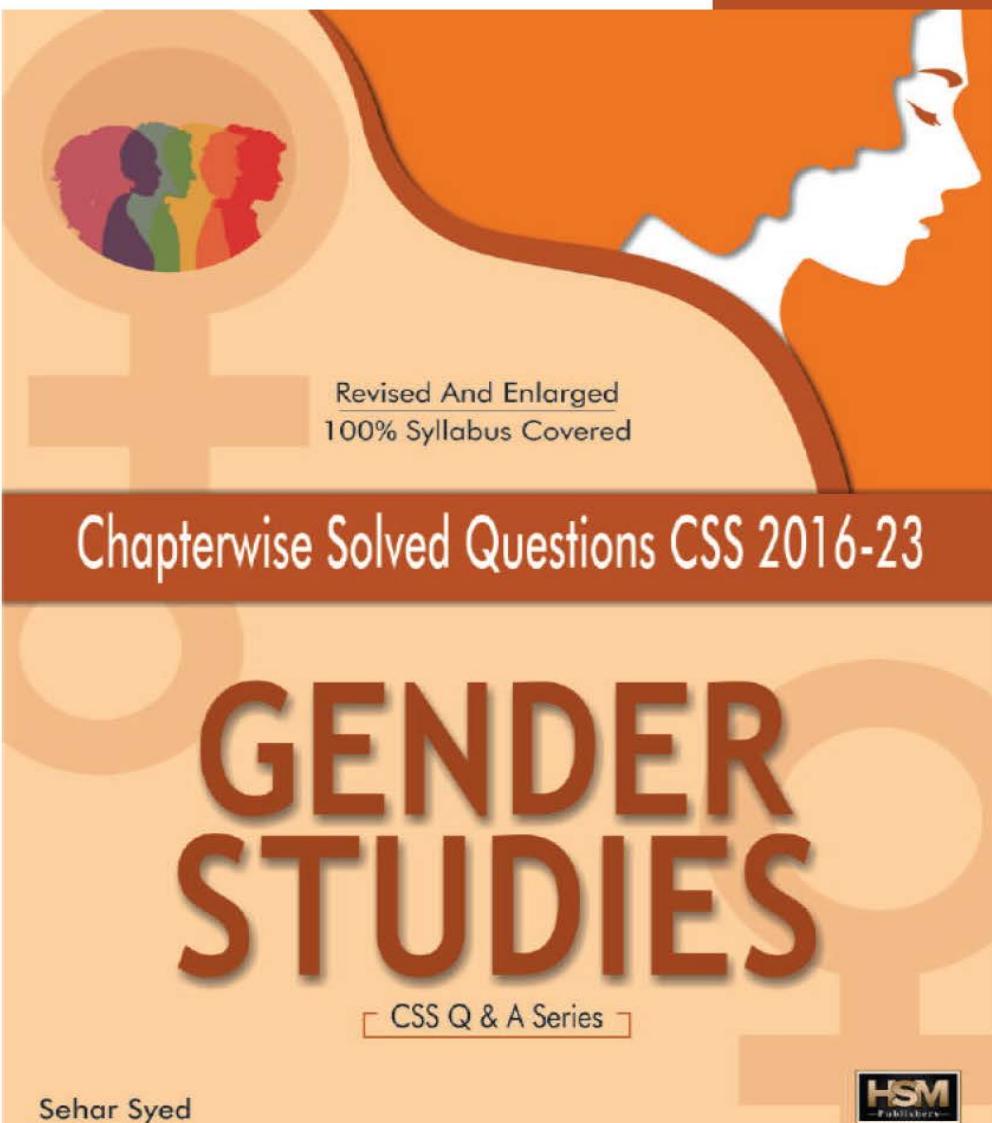
Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are people who have not crossed an international border but have moved to a different region than the one they call home

Stateless Persons

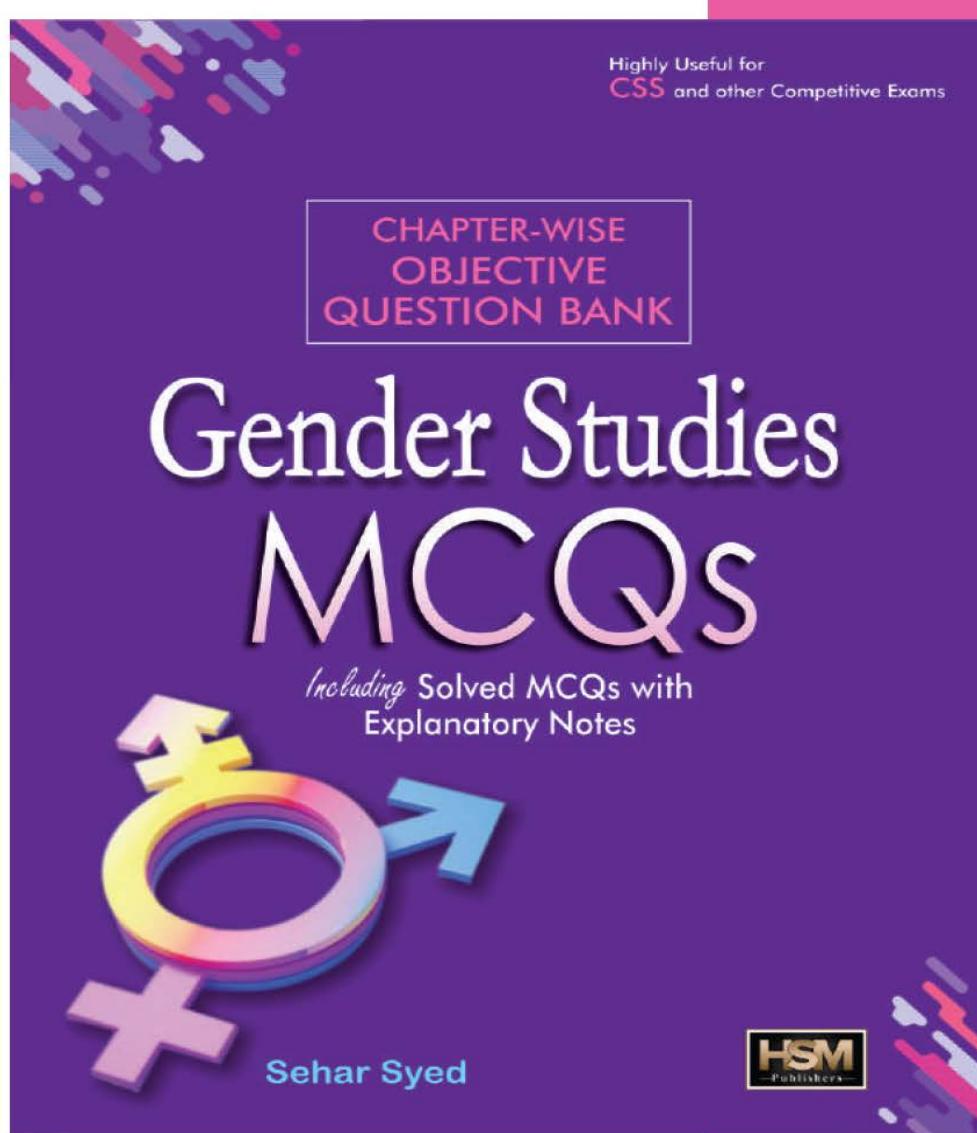
Stateless persons do not have a recognized nationality and do not belong to any country. Statelessness situations are usually caused by discrimination against certain groups. Their lack of a citizenship certificate can exclude them from access to important government services, including health care, education, or employment.

Asylum Seekers

Asylum seekers say they are refugees and have fled their homes as refugees do, but their claim to refugee status is not yet definitively evaluated in the country to which they fled.



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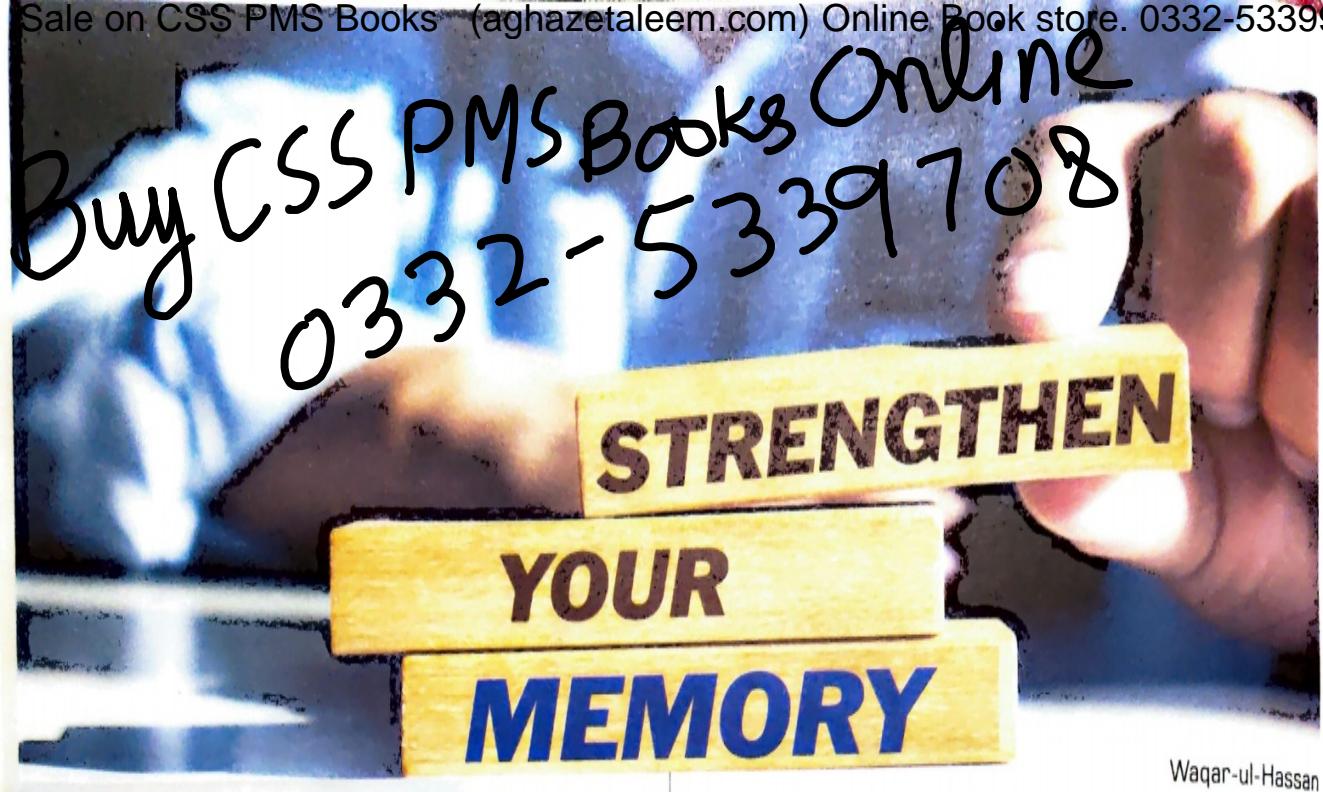
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Waqar-ul-Hassan

Memory is the capacity of our brain to store and analyse information in order to retrieve it later. Sometimes our memory falters ... and we have the impression that senility is coming for us. But do not panic, you can train your memory at any age! Here are some tips.

1. Meditate

According to a study from the University of California, meditating reduces problems with concentration and improves the ability to memorize. However, for this to be really effective, you'd have to practice meditation assiduously. There are meditation apps available that can help you get into the routine.

2. Play games

Games, like scrabble, chess and card games, are the perfect stimulus for concentration and memorization skills. There are so many games to exercise your memory and brain, that it would be a shame not to play any of them! Also, if you don't have a playmate, you can always fall back on crosswords or Sudoku.

3. Read and reread

Reading is the brain activity par excellence. Indeed, reading maintains and even improves the performance of your memory. It's not enough to simply learn things by heart. You have to really understand them. To memorize things well, you have to rephrase, explain aloud and not hesitate to reread them until you really appropriate the material.

4. Photographing with the eyes

65% of the population use their visual memory above all else. The brain behaves like a camera and associates words with pictures to better remember them. Visual memory can be strengthened with mnemonic means, associating an idea or word with an image.

5. Physical activity

Sports increase the blood flow to the brain and, along

with it, your mental agility. For people of age, regular exercise has been shown to reduce memory loss. Exercise helps with your cognitive capacities, especially spatial memory. So consider running, jumping, cycling! You will see your intellectual performance improve.

6. Eat healthy

A healthy and balanced diet plays an important role in the functioning of our meninges. Foods rich in Omega-3s are particularly good for boosting your brain activity. Coffee can also increase our concentration, but its consumption must remain reasonable.

7. Sleep well

Good, restful sleep is essential for brain activity. At night, your neurons organize and classify the information that we've received throughout the day. Sleeping well is therefore essential to improve your memory.

8. Train every day

Making your memory work hard and doing it often helps you to remember more and more things. It's the same as with sports: if you don't maintain the daily exercise, you lose agility. An example of daily training is to try to remember your appointments without always having recourse to the alarm of your mobile phone.

9. Do exercises

There are targeted exercises online to stimulate and motivate your memory. A short break from work will allow you to relax while working your brains. These little, often fun, exercises help reconnect neurons and facilitate all learning over time.

10. Avoid stress

Stress scares memories away, while calm allows for concentration and better memorization. You must therefore try to avoid stress, breathe well, and control your thoughts to have concentration and great memory.

The writer is a member of staff.

PAKISTAN'S LUNAR MISSION

“ A leap into space amidst domestic challenges ”

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Amir Shahzad Khawaja

A lunar mission, or journey to the Moon, can be undertaken by sending spacecraft or even people to this natural satellite of the Earth. Countries like the Soviet Union and the United States have been sending objects to the Moon since the 1950s. The Soviets sent Luna 2, the first object to touch the Moon, in 1959. They also did things like crash Luna 2 onto the moon and land Luna 9 softly. In the 1960s, the United States started sending things too. They had the Ranger Program - a series of uncrewed space missions that took close-up pictures, and the Surveyor Program, which landed softly - it sent seven robotic spacecraft to the surface of the Moon. But the big one was the Apollo Program. That's when they sent astronauts, like Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin, to walk on the moon's surface. Since then, NASA has been busy mapping the Moon with the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter. Now, they're planning to send people back with the Artemis Program, aiming for the first woman and the next man to go. These missions show how countries keep exploring and learning about the Moon, getting ready for bigger adventures beyond Earth.

While China's lunar program, led by the China National Space Administration (CNSA), has made big achievements in exploring the moon. They've launched a series of missions called Chang'e, named after a Chinese moon goddess. Chang'e-1 mapped, in 2007,

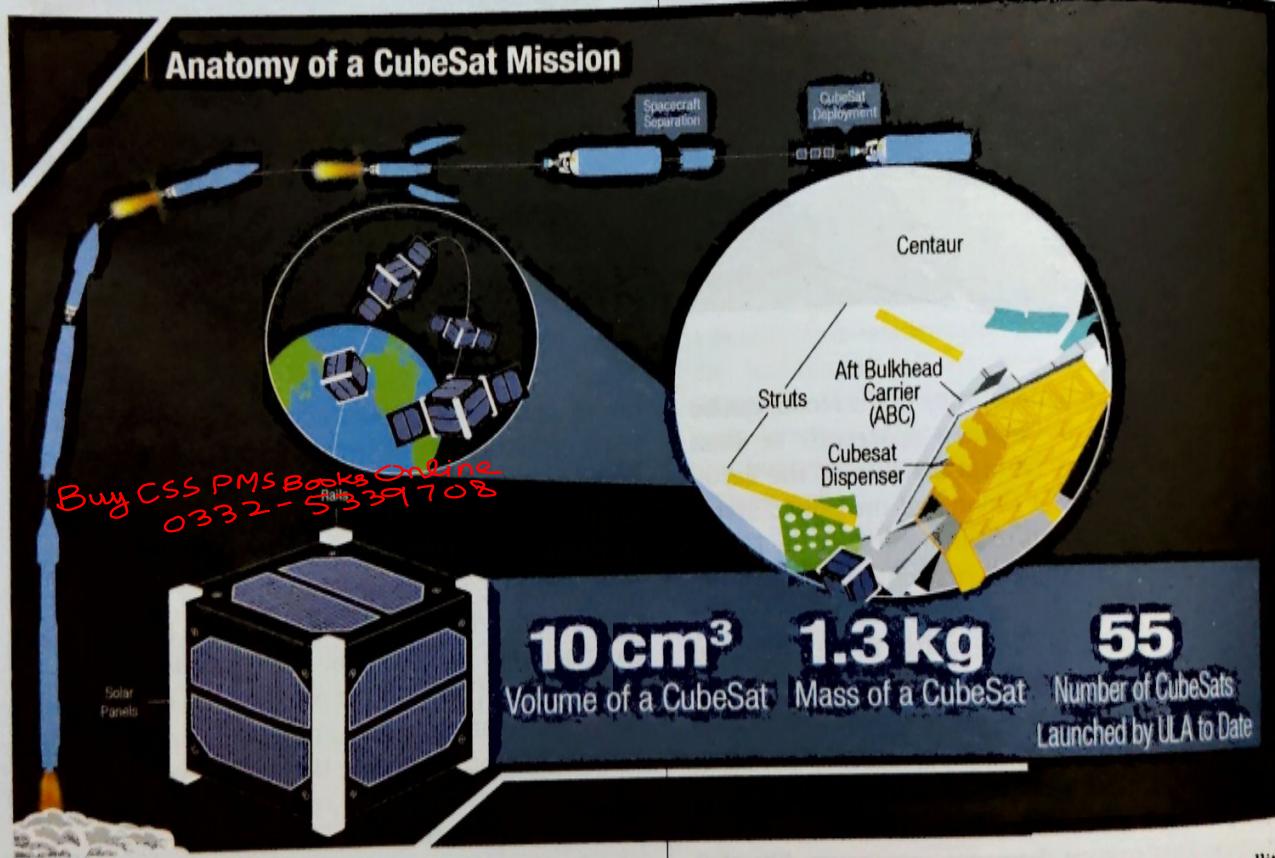
the moon's surface, followed by Chang'e-2 in 2010. Then came Chang'e-3 in 2013, which made China's first soft landing on the moon and sent a rover named Yutu to explore. Chang'e-4 in 2018 made history by landing on the far side of the Moon for the first time ever, carrying the rover Yutu-2. They've got more missions planned, like Chang'e-5, which brought back lunar samples in 2020 - the first mission to do so in over 40 years. China's lunar program has big goals, like studying the moon's geology, finding resources and eventually sending people there. They've also developed collaborations, like with the European Space Agency, showing they're serious about exploring and learning more about the Moon.

India's lunar missions, conducted by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), have significantly contributed to lunar exploration. Chandrayaan-1, launched in 2008, was India's maiden voyage to the Moon, orbiting it and providing crucial data on the composition of its surface, including the groundbreaking discovery of water molecules. Chandrayaan-2, launched in 2019, was even more ambitious, comprising an orbiter, a lander named Vikram and a rover named Pragyan. While the lander encountered communication issues during its descent, the orbiter continues to operate successfully, continuing to gather valuable scientific data. Chandrayaan-3, the third

mission in the Chandrayaan program, was launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre on 14 July 2023 and entered lunar orbit on 5 August. Notably, it achieved the distinction of becoming the first lander to touch down near the lunar south pole on 23 August. Nine months after Chandrayaan-3's historic feat, Pakistan has entered the space race with its inaugural lunar mission, backed by Chinese support from the Hainan Space Site. Pakistan became the sixth country in the world to go to the Moon with the launch of iCube-Q, on May 3, 2024, linked to the Chang'e-6 mission of China. The 7kg satellite, developed by the Electrical Engineering Department of the Institute of

collect lunar material, and return to Earth. Additionally, on Chang'e-6, China collaborated with France, Italy, Sweden and Pakistan for payloads, while Chang'e-7, slated for a 2026 launch, will carry payloads from Russia, Switzerland and Thailand. Notably, US law prohibits NASA from collaborating with China, directly or indirectly.

The future of Pakistan's space exploration efforts holds promise, as evidenced by its recent entry into the lunar exploration arena. With the successful launch of its first mission to the moon, Pakistan has demonstrated its capability to collaborate internationally and leverage partnerships for scientific endeavours. The



Space Technology (IST) in Islamabad over two years, was launched into lunar orbit by the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (Suparco). Dubbed iCube Qamar, the satellite reached the lunar orbit in just five days - on May 8 - and it transmitted the first-ever images it captured from the lunar orbit on May 10. The opportunity arose through the Asia Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO) in 2022, when the China National Space Agency (CNSA) invited member-states to send student-built payloads on the Chang'e-6 mission. Pakistan's iCube-Q was selected for this mission, which aims to land on the Moon's far side,

development and launch of the iCube-Q satellite highlight Pakistan's growing expertise in space technology and engineering, paving the way for further advancements in the field. Additionally, participation in prestigious international initiatives like the Chang'e missions signifies Pakistan's increasing recognition in the global space community. However, its significance must be critically analyzed within the context of pressing domestic issues such as poverty, unemployment, farmers' strikes, law enforcement and other social and political challenges. Firstly, while Pakistan's lunar mission showcases the country's scientific prowess and technological

potential, it prompts a critical examination of national priorities. In a nation grappling with persistent challenges like poverty and unemployment, the allocation of resources towards space exploration sparks debate. Some argue that investing in immediate socio-economic needs should take precedence over ambitious space endeavours. The success of the lunar mission, while a significant achievement, may not directly alleviate the hardships faced by the majority of Pakistan's population. For those struggling with poverty and limited opportunities, the tangible benefits of space exploration may seem distant and inaccessible. Therefore, amidst celebrations of this great scientific achievement, it becomes imperative for policymakers to consider the broader socio-economic impact of such investments and ensure that they address the pressing needs of the population effectively.

A large segment of Pakistan's population lives below the poverty line, struggling to meet basic needs such as food, shelter and healthcare. Poverty rates are particularly high in rural areas and among marginalized communities. Additionally, a high level of unemployment, especially among youth and women, contributes to economic instability and social unrest. Limited job opportunities exacerbate poverty and hinder socio-economic mobility. The quality of education remains a concern, with inadequate infrastructure and resources impacting learning outcomes. Access to quality healthcare services is unevenly distributed across Pakistan, with rural areas facing significant shortages of medical facilities and trained healthcare professionals. Limited access to healthcare exacerbates health disparities and undermines efforts to improve public health outcomes. Weak governance structures, bureaucratic inefficiencies and widespread corruption undermine public trust in

government institutions and hinder effective policy implementation. Corruption erodes public resources, exacerbates inequality and undermines efforts to address socio-economic challenges.

Addressing these socio-economic issues requires comprehensive policy interventions, including investment in education and healthcare, promotion of inclusive economic growth, enhancement of infrastructure and strengthening of governance mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability. Overall, while the Pakistani lunar mission symbolizes ambition and progress in science and technology, it is essential to critically assess its implications within the broader socio-economic and political context. Addressing poverty, unemployment, farmer's issues, law enforcement and other social challenges requires holistic approaches, effective governance and concerted efforts from all stakeholders to ensure sustainable development and improve the well-being of all citizens.

"Amidst the vast expanse of space, our journey to the Moon illuminates our ambition, but it is on Earth, amidst the challenges of poverty, unemployment, and social unrest, where our true tests of progress lie." ☒

The writer is an MPhil in Sociology from the International Islamic University, Islamabad.

MOON FACTS

Age

The Moon is believed to be around 4.5 billion years old, born from a giant collision of a Mars-sized object with the young Earth early in the Solar System's 4.6 billion year history.



4.5
billion years

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Composition

The surface of the Moon is mostly made of oxygen, silicon, magnesium, iron, calcium, aluminium and titanium. At its centre there may be a small, molten iron core.

O Si Mg Fe
Ca Al Ti

Colour

The surface of the Moon is quite dark. The colour of the lunar landscape is mostly charcoal-grey. The Moon reflects the light of the Sun.

Seen from Earth, the atmosphere scatters certain wavelengths of light. When the Moon is close to the horizon, it often looks reddish. As it goes higher in the sky and is less obscured by the atmosphere, the Moon appears more yellow.



A day on the Moon

The Moon takes around 29.53 Earth days to rotate once on its axis. So if you lived on the Moon you would experience about two weeks of day and two weeks of night.

Apr-May '24

World
in focus

NATIONAL

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M. Usman Butt

Apr. 16: The federal government appointed Shah Mahmood Khan the Director General (DG) Audit, Gilgit-Baltistan.

Apr. 16: Ashaz Merchant, a Pakistani chess prodigy, became the first player under 12 in Pakistan to attain the esteemed title of FIDE Arena Candidate Master.

Apr. 17: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) gave a clean chit to former prime minister and PMLN Quaid Nawaz Sharif in the Toshakhana case.

Apr. 17: The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Pakistan launched the Pakistan Climate Financing Activity, an up to \$10 million, four-year endeavour aimed at bolstering sustainability and climate resilience in Pakistan.

Apr. 17: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah expanded his cabinet by inducting eight more ministers, increasing the strength of the provincial cabinet to 18.

Apr. 17: The Sindh government launched informal education initiative to reach out-of-school children.

Apr. 18: President Asif Ali Zardari delivered his first address to the joint session of parliament.

Apr. 18: PMLN nominated Senator Irfan Siddiqui as the parliamentary leader in the Senate.

Apr. 18: Chief of the Turkish General Staff, General Metin Gürak, met the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Asim Munir, at the GHQ.

Apr. 18: Senior politician Mushahid Hussain Sayed launched Pakistan's first think tank on Africa.

Apr. 18: The Ministry of Law and Justice issued the notification of the appointment of the Chief Justices of Peshawar High Court (PHC) and Balochistan High Court (BHC).

Apr. 19: Khaqan Murtaza, a BS-21 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, was posted as Chairman of the Employees Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI).

Apr. 19: Pakistan made a formal request to the IMF for the next bailout package in the range of \$6 to \$8

billion under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) with the possibility of augmentation through climate financing.

Apr. 19: President Asif Ali Zardari conferred the Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) award on Chief of Turkish General Staff, General Metin Gurak, in recognition of his illustrious services and contribution to strengthening Pakistan-Turkiye defence relations.

Apr. 19: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (PMSS) terminated Shoaib Khoso's contract as the Director General of the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB).

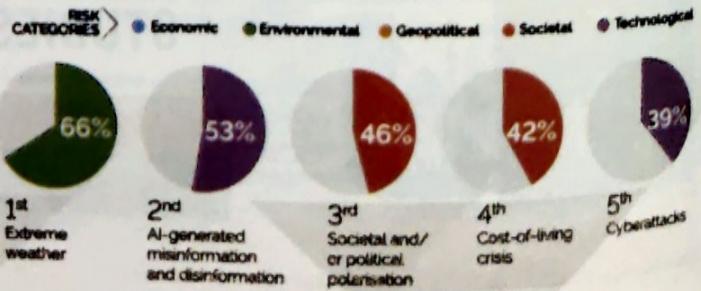
Apr. 19: A 14-member provincial cabinet of Balochistan took oath.

Apr. 19: Pakistan and Finland launched a vocational training program aimed at boosting the skills of young Pakistanis.

Apr. 20: Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA) and the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) solidified a momentous Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to foster the inception of Pakistan's premier IT hub, Nawaz Sharif IT City.

AI-GENERATED MISINFORMATION: A RISING THREAT

In the 2023-24 World Economic Forum Global Risks Perception Survey, AI-generated misinformation ranks as the second biggest threat on current risk landscape just behind extreme weather.



The Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project is a non-profit organization that has staff across six continents and hubs in Amsterdam, Washington, DC, and Sarajevo. Calling itself the "largest investigative journalism organizations in the world," the OCCRP is a newsroom that partners with other media organisations in stories and investigative projects.

What is OCCRP?

Founded by veteran investigative reporters Drew Sullivan and Paul Radu in 2007, the OCCRP says its mission is "to spread and strengthen investigative journalism around the world and expose crime and corruption so the public can hold power to account."

The organisation says its work is supported via public and private funding from institutions and

individual supporters. Some of the funding channels mentioned on the OCCRP website are Ford Foundation, the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Open Society Foundation, the National Endowment for Democracy, USAID, the US Department of State, and the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO).

Apr. 20: Justice Hashim Khan Kakar took oath as the BHC chief justice.

Apr. 20: Adviser to CM Sindh Allah Dino a.k.a. Babal Khan Bhayo resigned from his post.

Apr. 20: The federal cabinet approved amendments to the Special Professional Pay Scale Policy, 2019, to end the age limit of 65 years while making appointments against important posts with a monthly salary of up to Rs2 million.

Apr. 20: Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim took oath as chief justice of the PHC.

Apr. 21: After the 2024 general election, the country's first by-elections on 21 vacant national and provincial assembly seats were held.

Apr. 21: Pakistan named the Eleventh Avenue as the Iran Avenue.

Apr. 21: Former senior bureaucrat Roedad Khan, who served on key posts in the federal and provincial governments, passed away at 101.

Apr. 21: West Indies women upstaged Pakistan to seal the three-match series.

Apr. 22: Iranian President Dr Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi visited Pakistan.

Apr. 22: President Raisi and PMSS jointly inaugurated the newly-constructed portion of 11th Avenue after renaming it Iran Avenue.

Apr. 22: The Punjab government appointed Prof Dr Shazia Bashir the acting vice chancellor (VC) of the Government College University (GCU), Lahore – the first woman in the university's 160-year history to have this position.

Apr. 22: CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz inaugurated Pakistan's first virtual women police station, "Meri Awaz...Maryam Nawaz" in Lahore.

Apr. 22: The Punjab government relieved DIG Operations, Lahore, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi to assume his new posting as the Inspector General of Islamabad Police.

Apr. 23: The UNDP ranked Pakistan 45th out of 52 countries on the World Internet Development Index.

Apr. 23: Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan signed a partnership agreement to boost economic cooperation and create new opportunities for investors in the region.

Apr. 24: Former Google executive Tania Aidrus, who headed Digital Pakistan's initiative in December 2019 during the rule of ousted prime minister Imran Khan, was appointed as "convener" of the Digital Pakistan committee.

Apr. 24: Mervyn Francis Lobo, chief executive officer of the Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre (MALC), was awarded the prestigious Cross of Merit with Ribbon of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Apr. 24: A ban was imposed on sugarcane cultivation up to 1500 meters around Motorway-M5, in Ghotki district.

Apr. 25: Pakistan became the fifth largest recipient of loans and grants from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as the total disbursement stood at \$1.8 billion in 2023.

Apr. 25: Punjab Food Minister Bilal Yasin launched the special 'Meat Safety Task Force' in Punjab Food Authority.

Apr. 25: The Supreme Court ordered the auction of the Nasla Tower land for payment of compensation to the affected families.

Apr. 25: Former Pakistan Women's skipper Bismah Maroof announced retirement from all cricket.

Apr. 25: PMSS launched the Shuhada Package to support the families of the federal government officials martyred in the line of duty.

Apr. 25: The United States and Pakistan renewed the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), signed in 2003, to promote bilateral trade.

Apr. 26: The federal cabinet allowed an extension in the stay of Afghan refugees holding the Proof of Registration cards till June 30.

Apr. 26: Pakistan's first hand-drawn animated movie 'The Glassworker' became the first film from the Subcontinent to have ever been selected for official competition at the world-renowned Annecy

Turkiye has halted trade with Israel, which amounted to some \$9.5B

Recep Tayyip Erdogan
Turkiye's President



International Animation Film Festival 2024.

Apr. 26: Pakistani squash sensations Abdullah Zaman and Ahmad Ali Naz clinched silver medals at the Junior Squash Championship in Doha.

Apr. 27: Pakistan clinched a nail-biting victory over New Zealand, drawing the five-match T20I series 2-2.

Apr. 27: The SBP maintained a tight monetary policy for over two years, the second-longest period in recent history, keeping interest rates higher for longer than normal.

Apr. 28: PMSS addressed a session of the World Economic Forum (WEF) on global health.

Apr. 28: PMSS appointed Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar as the deputy prime minister.

Apr. 28: The PCB announced the appointment of former South African left-handed opener Gary Kirsten as Pakistan's white-ball head coach and former Australian pacer Jason Gillespie as the country's red-ball head coach.

Apr. 29: The IMF's executive board approved completion of the second review and release of the third and last tranche of \$1.1 billion for Pakistan under \$3 billion Standby Arrangement (SBA).

Apr. 29: President Zardari conferred the award of Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) upon General Selcuk Bayraktaroglu, Commander of Turkish Land Forces.

Apr. 29: PMSS called on Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Apr. 30: The Punjab cabinet approved in principle the issuance of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Kisan Card for the welfare of small farmers across Punjab.

Apr. 30: PMSS appointed PMLN Punjab President Rana Sanaullah as his adviser on political and public affairs.

Apr. 30: Ex-Attorney General of Pakistan and a senior lawyer Irfan Qadir was appointed as Consultant on Legal Affairs in the President Secretariat.

Apr. 30: Senator Salim Saifullah assumed charge as president of International Lawn Tennis Club of Pakistan.

Apr. 30: Uber Technologies Inc. shut down its Pakistan operations, ending its ride-hailing services in the country, but will continue to operate on the Careem platform.

Apr. 30: Unicef Pakistan launched its National Gender Strategy (2024-2027) to bring about lasting and transformative change for millions of girls aged between 10 and 19 years.

May 01: COAS General Asim held a meeting with General Sir Roland Walker, designate Chief of General Staff (CGS) of the UK Army, on the sidelines of opening session of the 6th Pakistan-UK Regional Stabilisation Conference.

May 01: CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz inaugurated Field Hospitals Project.

May 01: The Senate Secretariat's senior most officer Syed Hasnain Haider was appointed as Senate Secretary.

May 01: PTI nominated Barrister Senator Syed Ali Zafar as the parliamentary leader in Senate.

May 02: The joint bilateral exercise of the Pakistan and US navies – 'Inspired Union 2024' – was held in Karachi.

May 03: The federal government established a new agency, the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA), for probing electronic crimes — effectively making the FIA's Cyber Crime Wing defunct.

May 03: In a historic achievement for Pakistan, the country's first satellite mission to the moon, iCube Qamar, was launched on board China's Chang'E6 from Hainan, China.

May 03: Dr. Muhammad Fakhre Alam Irfan was appointed Secretary of the National Food Security and Research Division.

May 03: The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution, sponsored by Pakistan and eight other countries, to proclaim May 24 as the International Day of the Markhor.

May 03: Pakistan Super League commissioner Naila Bhatti resigned.

May 04: President Zardari approved the appointment of Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, Faisal Karim Kundi and Jafar Khan Mandokhel as governors of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, respectively.

May 04: CM Punjab inaugurated the 'Free Medicine Delivery Project' for the people across Punjab.

May 04: The FPSC announced the result of CSS 2023 exam – the passing ratio stands at 2.96%.

May 04: British-Pakistani boxer Amir Khan was conferred the honorary rank of captain by the Pakistan Army.

May 04: CM Sindh launched Pakistan's 1st Automated Fare Collection System for People's Bus Service.

May 05: Pakistani mountaineer Naila Kiani successfully scaled the world's fifth highest peak, Makalu, at 8,485 metres located in Nepal, becoming the first Pakistani woman to summit 11 peaks of over 8,000 metres.

May 06: The SCP suspended the ECP's order as well as the PHC verdict of refusing the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) the reserved seats for women and minorities and giving it to other political parties.

May 06: Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhel was sworn in as the

OPENING UP THE CLOUDS

WHAT IS CLOUD SEEDING

A weather-modification technology that can create rain in drought-affected areas and also help fight air pollution

HOW IT WORKS

Scientists use aircraft or rockets to inject silver iodide or another substance into the atmosphere to mimic ice nuclei

HELPING HAND

Clouds often lack naturally occurring ice nuclei, so injecting them with silver iodide particles (which are very similar in structure to ice) increases the number of nuclei

HOW IT HAPPENS

It makes the clouds more efficient at generating ice crystals that either fall as snowflakes or melt to produce raindrops, depending on temperatures in and beneath the cloud. Cloud seeding is also used to disperse fog banks near some airports



The amount of rain or snow a cloud can produce depends on the balance between the number of ice nuclei inside it and the amount of water available to grow around those nuclei

World's Richest Family

The Nahyan royal family from the United Arab Emirates holds prominent positions in both business and politics in the Gulf region and is also one of the world's richest families. Their net worth exceeds the combined wealth of Microsoft founder Bill Gates and Amazon founder Jeff Bezos.

The head of the Nahyan family, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, is the President of the UAE and the ruler of Abu Dhabi. He has 18 brothers, 11 sisters, nine children and 18 grandchildren. All the members of the family live together in the "Qasr Al-Watan," a grandiose structure that spans 380,000 square meters and is valued at \$478 million.

The family's real estate portfolio includes luxurious properties and developments both within the UAE and internationally. They own eight aircraft, including an Airbus A320-200 and three Boeing 787-9. Sheikh Mohammed's personal collection includes a Boeing 747 worth \$478 million and a Boeing 787 valued at \$176 million. In addition, they own three of the world's largest yachts.

Their car collection is nothing short of remarkable. Reports suggest that their vehicles are spread across four museums in the UAE and Morocco. From Ferraris to Lamborghinis, the family owns more than 700 cars.

The family owns an 81 percent stake in the City Football Group, which controls football clubs such as Manchester City, Mumbai City, Melbourne City and New York City.

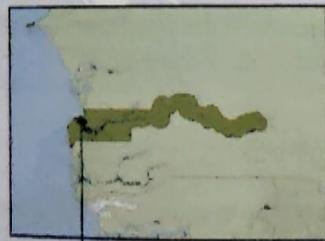
new governor of Balochistan.

May 06: The federal government appointed Zulfiqar Haider as new Secretary of Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Organization of Islamic Cooperation meeting in Gambia

THE THEME OF THE SUMMIT

"Enhancing Unity and Solidarity through Dialogue for Sustainable Development"



May 4-5
Banjul, Gambia



Sept. 25, 1969

Founded in Rabat, the capital of Morocco, under the name Organisation of Islamic Conference

2011

Renamed the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation at the 38th meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs

COMMISSIONS OF THE OIC



"Economic and Commercial Cooperation"

"Al-Quds Committee"

"Information and Cultural Affairs"

"Scientific and Technological Cooperation"

MEMBER COUNTRIES

Afghanistan, Albania, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Benin, Bangladesh, United Arab Emirates, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Algeria, Djibouti, Chad, Indonesia, Morocco, Ivory Coast, Palestine, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Iraq, Iran, Cameroon, Qatar, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Comoros, Kuwait, Libya, Lebanon, Maldives, Malaysia, Mali, Egypt, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Suriname, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Togo, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Oman, Jordan, Yemen

OBSERVER COUNTRIES

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Central African Republic, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Thailand, Russia

May 06: PPP senior leader Shehla Raza stepped down from the office of President of Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF).

May 08: President Zardari approved the appointment of Rubina Khalid as Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme.

May 08: Declaring an education emergency in the country,

PMSS vowed to get around 26 million out-of-school children enrolled and promote literacy.

May 08: Pakistan's inaugural lunar satellite, ICUBE-Q, successfully entered the moon's orbit.

May 09: General Michael Erik Kurilla, commander United States CENTCOM, called on COAS General Asim at the GHQ.

May 10: The ECP suspended 27 Punjab MPAs elected on reserved seats.

May 10: Newly promoted Lt. Gen Omer Bukhari was appointed as the commander of the Peshawar-based XI Corps, replacing Lt Gen Hassan Azhar Hayat Khan.

May 10: Chief of Logistics Staff Lt Gen Nauman Zakria was posted as the commander of Mangla Corps.

May 10: DG ISPR Maj Gen Ahmad Sharif was promoted to the rank of a lieutenant general and retained at ISPR.

May 10: CM Punjab inaugurated the Clinic-on-Wheels project.

May 10: Salim Haider Khan took the oath as the 40th governor of Punjab.

May 10: Pakistan's first satellite mission to the moon, iCube-

Qamar, sent the first-ever image of the moon captured in the lunar orbit.

May 10: Ireland beat Pakistan for the first time in T20Is.

May 13: The ECP suspended notification of the 77 candidates elected to reserved seats in the national and provincial assemblies in the light of the Supreme Court's decision.

May 13: PMSS approved the immediate release of Rs23 billion to help the AJK government solve the problems of the people.

May 14: PMSS announced that all State Owned Enterprises (SOEs), whether those loss-making or in profit, except from strategic SOEs, would be privatized.

May 14: A global collaborative investigative journalism project, the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), revealed the ownership of properties of the global elite in Dubai. Pakistanis have also been identified on the list and their combined value has been estimated at around \$11 billion.

May 15: The Pakistan Army conducted successful training launch of Fatah-II Guided Rocket System with a range of 400 kilometres.

May 15: Pakistan outclassed Ireland in the third and final Twenty20 International to seal the series 2-1.

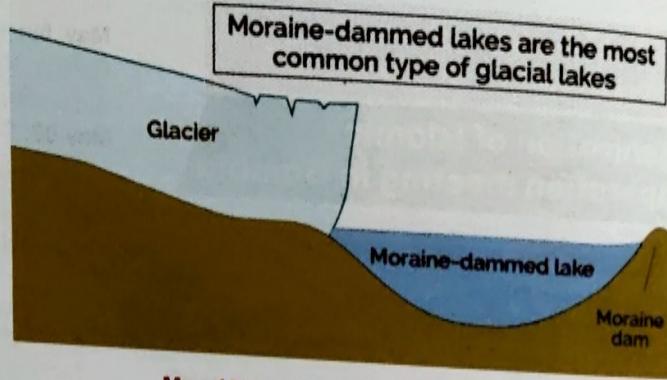
May 15: The IHC approved PTI founder Imran Khan's bail petition in the £190 million National Crime Agency (NCA) settlement reference.



What is a Glacial Lake

Glacial Lakes are common in the high elevation of glacierised basins. They are formed when glacial ice or moraines or natural depressions impound water

The moraines create topographic depression in which the melt water accumulates



May 15: Pakistan lifted bronze in the poomsae event of the Asian Taekwondo Championship, in Vietnam.

The World's Largest Biome

The Taiga, also known as the boreal forest, is the largest terrestrial biome on Earth. A biome is a distinct geographical region with specific climate, vegetation and animal life. It consists of a biological community that has formed in response to its physical environment and regional climate. Biomes may span more than one continent. A biome encompasses multiple ecosystems within its boundaries. The Taiga houses 30 percent of the world's forest cover, 11 percent of the Earth's landmass and stretches from Scotland to Newfoundland, via Russia and Canada! This vast biome is characterized by its cold climate, coniferous forests and unique biodiversity. The Taiga experiences long, cold winters and short, cool summers. Temperatures can vary widely, from well below freezing in winter to mild in summer. These harsh environmental conditions shape the vegetation and wildlife that inhabit the Taiga. Coniferous trees, such as spruce, fir and pine, dominate the Taiga landscape. These trees are adapted to the cold climate, with needle-like leaves that reduce water loss and allow them to photosynthesize even in low temperatures. The dense canopy of the Taiga trees helps to insulate the forest floor, creating a relatively stable microclimate. The Taiga is home to a variety of wildlife species adapted to its cold, snowy conditions. Mammals such as moose, reindeer, wolves and bears are common in the Taiga. Many of these animals have thick fur or other adaptations to help them survive the cold winters. Bird species such as owls, woodpeckers and grouse are also found in the Taiga, taking advantage of the abundance of coniferous trees for nesting and roosting. In addition to its rich biodiversity, the Taiga plays a vital role in the global carbon cycle. The dense forests of the Taiga store large amounts of carbon, helping to mitigate climate change by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. However, human activities such as logging and mining pose a threat to the Taiga and its biodiversity. Conservation efforts are underway to protect this important biome and the species that depend on it for survival. Overall, the Taiga is a unique and important biome that plays a crucial role in the global ecosystem. Its cold climate, coniferous forests, and rich biodiversity make it a fascinating and important area of study for scientists and conservationists alike.

INTERNATIONAL

Apr. 16: The torch for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games was lit in ancient Olympia in a traditional ceremony.

Apr. 16: Astronomers identified the largest stellar black hole – named Gaia BH3 – yet discovered in the Milky Way, with a mass 33 times that of the Sun.

Apr. 16: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz concluded his visit to China.

Apr. 17: Independent Palestinian photojournalist Motaz Azaiza was named one of the '100 Most Influential People' of 2024 by Time Magazine for acting as the 'world's eyes and ears' during the ongoing Israeli military offensive.

Apr. 17: Former Pakistan player Mushtaq Ahmed joined Bangladesh as spin-bowling coach for the T20 World Cup.

Apr. 18: The United States cast a veto in the Security Council to deny the Palestinian Authority full UN membership.

Apr. 18: The world's largest general election got underway in India.

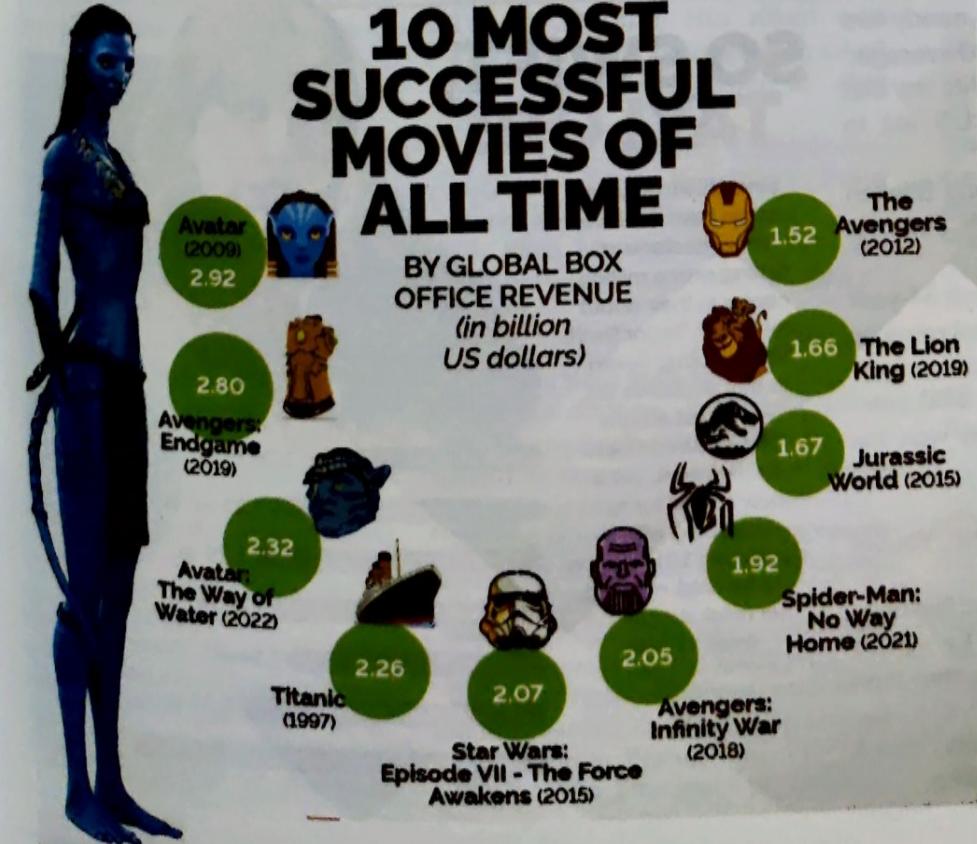
Apr. 18: Kenya's military chief, General Francis Ogolla, was killed in a military helicopter crash.

Apr. 18: A Maldives high court overturned former president Abdulla Yameen's 11-year jail term.

Apr. 18: The United States announced new sanctions on Iran targeting its unmanned aerial vehicle production, after its attack on Israel.

Apr. 18: Britain announced to introduce sanctions on Iran in coordination with Washington.

Apr. 18: Reuters photographer Mohammed Salem won the prestigious 2024 World Press Photo of the Year award for his



Food Security

Food security is defined by the World Food Summit of 1996: "When all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active, and healthy life".

It includes the following dimensions:

Availability: This refers to the presence of food within a country, including food produced domestically, imports and stock stored in government granaries.

Accessibility: Accessibility ensures that food is within reach of every individual without discrimination, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to obtain the food they need.

Affordability: Affordability means having enough financial resources to purchase sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet one's dietary requirements. It ensures that individuals can afford to buy the food they need to maintain their health and well-being.

image of a Palestinian woman cradling the body of her five-year-old niece in the Gaza Strip.

Apr. 18: The World Health Organisation and around 500 experts agreed, for the first time, what it means for a disease to spread through the air.

Apr. 19: Sri Lanka team won the international trophy, beating two Pakistan teams in the 63rd National Amateur Golf Championship.

Apr. 19: Foreign ministers from the G7 countries wrapped up three days of talks on the island of Capri in Italy with a pledge to bolster Ukraine's air defences to counter increasingly deadly Russian attacks.

Apr. 19: Armenia agreed to return several villages to Azerbaijan.

Apr. 19: Three Russians – Mikhail Korniienko, Alexander Lynn and Denis Yefremov – set a world record for parachuting from the Earth's stratosphere to the North Pole.

Apr. 19: The United States imposed sanctions on Ben-Zion Gopstein, founder and leader of the rightwing group Lehava, which opposes Jewish assimilation with non-Jews.

Apr. 19: China announced the creation of a new military cyber corps 'The Information Support Force' that would bolster Beijing's capacity to 'fight and win' wars.

Apr. 19: The US Senate voted to approve the reauthorization of a controversial surveillance program, FISA.

Apr. 20: North Korea tested a 'super-large warhead' designed for a

GK CORNER

strategic cruise missile.

Apr. 20: The US House of Representatives passed a \$95 billion legislative package providing security assistance to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan.

Apr. 21: The Chinese Navy kicked off a biennial meeting of top foreign naval officials in the port city of Qingdao.

Apr. 21: Reigning Olympic champion Peres Jepchirchir crushed the women's-only world record in winning the 44th London Marathon, clocking two hours, 16 minutes and 16 seconds.

Apr. 22: EU foreign ministers agreed in principle to expand sanctions on Iran following Tehran's missile and drone attack on Israel.

Apr. 22: World No. 1 Nelly Korda won her LPGA record-tying fifth straight event.

Apr. 22: Major General Aharon Haliva, Israel's military intelligence chief, resigned.

Apr. 22: Turkiye and Iraq agreed to cooperate against Kurdish militants, boost economic ties via a new trade corridor and consider Iraq's needs for water.

Apr. 23: Inter Milan won their 20th Serie A title.

Apr. 23: Spain's World Cup-winning midfielder Aitana Bonmati was named the Sportswoman of the Year, while Serbia's Novak Djokovic captured the top men's honour at the Laureus awards ceremony.

Apr. 23: The US State Department's annual human rights assessment found significant abuses in India's northeastern Manipur state last year and a surge in attacks on minorities, journalists and dissenting voices in the rest of the country.

Apr. 23: The World Meteorological Organisation released its

The State of the Climate in Asia 2023 report which said that Asia is warming faster than the global average, with temperatures last year nearly two degrees Celsius above the 1961 to 1990 average.

Apr. 24: President Biden signed a bill into law that provides billions of dollars of new US aid to Ukraine for its war with Russia.

Apr. 25: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken reached Beijing for tough talks with the rival power's leaders.

Apr. 26: Japanese yen tumbled to a fresh 34-year low after the Bank of Japan kept interest rates on hold.

Apr. 27: Alejandra Marisa Rodriguez, a 60-year-old Argentine, made history when she won the prestigious Miss Universe title for the Buenos Aires province.

Apr. 29: Scotland's leader Humza Yousaf resigned.

Apr. 29: The US State Department found five units of the Israeli military responsible for gross violations of human rights in incidents that took place outside of Gaza.

Apr. 29: Paris St Germain were crowned Ligue 1 champions for a record-extending 12th time.

Apr. 30: The ICJ judges ruled against issuing emergency orders to stop German arms exports to Israel.

May 01: Fujian aircraft carrier – China's third aircraft carrier after the Liaoning and the Shandong vessels and the Chinese navy's largest-ever ship – took to the water for maiden sea trials.

May 01: Colombian President Gustavo Petro announced to break diplomatic relations with Israel over its actions in Gaza.

May 02: A UK team of archaeologists revealed the reconstructed face of a 75,000-year-old Neanderthal woman named Shanidar Z.

May 02: West Indies batter Devon Thomas was banned for five years.

May 02: Turkiye stopped all exports and imports to and from Israel.

May 02: Solomon Islands' lawmakers elected China-friendly former foreign minister Jeremiah Manele as prime minister.

May 04: Kuwait's Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah was banned for 15 years from all positions within the International Olympic Committee (IOC) over ethics breaches.

May 04: Pakistani bus driver's son Sadiq Khan stormed to victory in the London mayoral election, making history as the first-ever person in British history to clinch three terms as London Mayor.

May 05: Real Madrid claimed a record-extending 36th LaLiga title.

May 05: World number one Iga Swiatek edged Aryna Sabalenka to win Madrid Open title.

May 05: The 15th Summit of the OIC Member States was

SO SWIFT, TAYLOR!

Since 1991, only 24 albums have achieved the milestone of selling over a million copies in their debut week, with Taylor Swift contributing seven to that exclusive list. Her latest album, 'The Tortured Poets Department', set a new record for her, launching with a staggering 1914 million copies sold, marking her most successful week to date.



Album	Week	Weekend Total
Speak Now	11/13/2010	1.05 m
Red	11/10/2012	1.21 m
1989	11/15/2014	1.29 m
reputation	12/2/2017	1.22 m
Midnights	11/5/2022	1.14 m
1989 (Taylor's version)	11/11/2023	1.36 m
The Tortured Poets Department	5/4/2024	1.91 m

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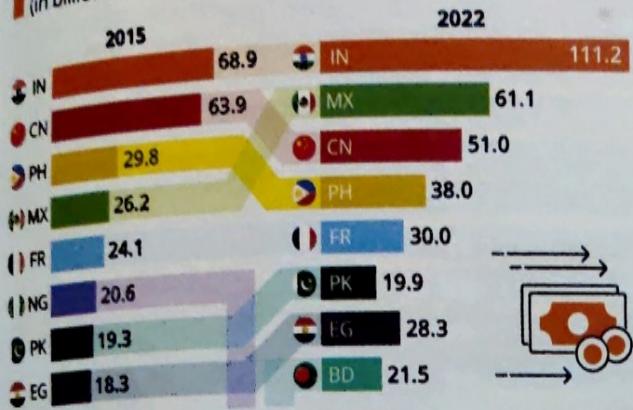
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India Leads Global Inbound Remittances

Countries receiving the most international remittances (in billion U.S. dollars)



held in the Gambian capital, Banjul.

May 05: British actor Bernard Hill, best known for his role of Captain Edward Smith in the Oscar-winning 1997 epic romance 'Titanic', died.

May 05: Zaki Wardak, the Afghan Consul-General in India's Mumbai, stepped down after she was accused of smuggling nearly \$2 million worth of gold into the country.

May 06: World Cup-winning coach Cesar Luis Menotti, who led Argentina to the title in 1978, died at the age of 85.

May 06: French President Emmanuel Macron and EU Commission president Ursula von der Leyen held talks with Chinese president Xi Jinping at a summit in Paris.

May 07: Scottish parliament approved political veteran John Swinney to lead the country as First Minister, succeeding Humza Yousaf.

May 07: TikTok and its Chinese parent company ByteDance filed a legal challenge against the United States, taking aim at a law that would force the app to be sold or face a US ban.

May 07: England's Kyren Wilson won his first world snooker title.

May 07: Bangladesh beat Zimbabwe in the third Twenty20 International to seal the five-match series 3-0.

May 08: EU member states reached agreement on a plan to use billions of euros in profits from frozen Russian central bank assets to arm Ukraine and fund its post-war reconstruction.

May 09: Israeli tanks and warplanes bombarded areas of Rafah.

May 09: Panamanian lawyer Ramon Fonseca, one of the heads of the now-defunct law firm Mossack Fonseca that was at the epicentre of the global 'Panama Papers' scandal, died.

GK Tidbits

Zaman Siddiqui

14. The first general election in post-partition India was held in: **1951**

15. The founding chairman of the National Science Council of Pakistan was: **Salim-uz-Zaman Siddiqui**

16. Air Marshal Nur Khan was appointed the Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Air Force in: **July 1965**

17. The first Pakistani Commander-in-Chief of Pak Army was: **Field Marshal Ayub Khan**

18. Field Marshal Ayub Khan, the former President of Pakistan, died in: **1974**

19. Pakistan's first law minister was: **Jogendra Nath Mandal**

20. Israel captured the West Bank in the Middle East war of: **1967**

21. The current head of the Intelligence Bureau is: **Fawad Asadullah**

22. The stars born from the explosive collapse of massive stars are called: **Neutron Stars**

23. The Himalayan mountain range spans approximately: **2,400 kms**

24. The English Channel, an arm of the Atlantic Ocean, separates England from: **France**

25. Plato, a prominent philosopher

from Classical Greece, was Socrates's: **Student**

26. The Academy was founded by Plato in Athens in: **387 BCE**

27. The driest non-polar desert in the world, the Atacama Desert, is located in: **South America**

28. Salt Lake City is the capital and largest city of the US state of: **Utah**

29. The National Assembly passed the first Constitution Amendment Bill on: **April 23, 1974**

30. The first Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan was: **M. Ali Nasr**

31. Banjul is the capital of: **Gambia**

32. The famous pirate who was nicknamed "My Pirate" by Queen Elizabeth I was: **Sir Francis Drake**

33. The International Day of Human Space Flight is observed on: **April 12**

34. Shahrисабz, the Economic Cooperation Organization's Tourism Capital for 2024, is a city in: **Uzbekistan**

35. The Quetta Radio Station was opened in: **1974**

36. The transmitter for Quetta Radio Station was provided by: **Russia**

37. The mosquitoes that cause malaria in humans are: **Anopheles**

38. Faisal Mosque, Islamabad, was

May 10: Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin was reappointed as head of the country's government.

May 10: The UNGA voted overwhelmingly to grant the Palestinians some additional rights in the global body, after their drive for full membership was blocked by the United States.

May 11: Japan defeated Pakistan in penalty shoot-out to clinch the 30th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup in Ipoh, Malaysia.

May 11: Iran's conservatives and ultra-conservatives clinched more seats in a partial rerun of the country's parliamentary elections.

May 12: Kuwait formed a new cabinet headed by Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Sabah.

May 12: Rick Slayman, the man who became the first human to receive a new kidney from a genetically modified pig, died.

May 12: Russian President Vladimir

FAVOURITE CITIES OF THE BILLIONAIRES

Rank change		Number of billionaires
▲ 1	1 New York	119
▲ 3	2 London	97
▲ 4	3 Mumbai	92
▼ 3	4 Beijing	91
▼ 2	5 Shanghai	87
▼ 2	6 Shenzhen	84
▼ 1	7 Hong Kong	65
▲ 6	8 Moscow	59
▲ 6	9 New Delhi	57
	10 San Francisco	52

The favourite cities for the wealthy, based on the number of billionaires, and luxury investments, include New York City, London, and Mumbai. These cities attract the affluent due to their significant economic, cultural, and social opportunities.



GK Tidbits

designed by Turkish architect: **Vedat Dalokay**

39. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was appointed deputy prime minister of Pakistan on: **December 7, 1971**

40. The only woman to remain the deputy prime minister of Pakistan was: **Nusrat Bhutto**

41. The farthest human-made object in the universe is: **NASA's Voyager 1**

42. Voyager 1 was launched on: **Sept. 5, 1977**

43. The chemical process that uses an electric current to drive a non-spontaneous chemical reaction is known as: **Electrolysis**

44. The number of European countries that are part of the Schengen area is: **29**

45. The Schengen Agreement was signed in: **1985**

46. The full implementation of the Schengen Agreement occurred on: **March 26, 1995**

47. The last General Officer Commanding of the Eastern Command in 1971 Pak-India war was: **Lt-Gen Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi**

48. The capital and largest city of

Mexico is: **Mexico City**

49. The country that has long been known as the "land of football" is: **Brazil**

50. Jashn-i-Kaghlasht is a famous spring festival celebrated in: **Upper Chitral**

51. Brazil national football team is commonly known as: **Selecao**

52. The national animal of Pakistan is: **Markhor**

53. The Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act was enacted in: **2016**

54. The last Tughlaq ruler was: **Feroz Shah Tughlaq**

55. The study of the general principles of scientific classification is called: **Taxonomy**

56. Accra is the capital of: **Ghana**

57. The world's third-largest reservoir by volume is: **Lake Volta**

58. Catatumbo lightning is a unique natural phenomenon that appears in: **Venezuela**

59. The first poet who composed the immortal legend of Heer in Punjabi language was: **Damodar Das Gulati**

60. Tropical cyclones develop in the region between the Tropics of Capricorn and: **Cancer**

61. Hudhud, Titli, Phethai, Fani, Vayu

and Amphan are among the names of cyclones in the: **Indian Ocean**

62. The UN Convention on the Rights of Child was adopted on: **20 November 1989**

63. The Antarctic Treaty that established Antarctica as a region dedicated to peaceful purposes, scientific cooperation and environmental protection was signed in:

1959

64. Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (the Madrid Protocol) was adopted in:

1991

65. The World Press Freedom Index is released by the global media watchdog: **Reporters Without Borders (RSF)**

66. The World Intellectual Property Organisation (a UN agency that deals with IP and innovation) is headquartered in: **Geneva**

67. AG Chagla's tune of the national anthem of Pakistan was officially adopted on: **August 21, 1950**

68. In WWII, Nazi Germany's unconditional surrender came into force on: **May 8, 1945**

69. The UK signed a deal with

Putin removed his defence minister Sergei Shoigu in a major shake-up to Russia's military leadership.

May 12: Switzerland won the famed Eurovision Song Contest with Nemo becoming the first non-binary performer to win the competition.

May 13: India and Iran signed a 10-year contract to develop and equip the strategic Chabahar port in Iran.

May 13: Britain's King Charles III officially handed over the role of Colonel-in-Chief of the Army Air Corps to Prince William.

May 13: OpenAI released GPT-4, a higher performing and more efficient version of the artificial intelligence technology that underpins its popular generative tool ChatGPT, making it free to all users.

May 14: A new study published in journal 'Nature' revealed that 2023 summer in northern hemisphere was the hottest in 2,000 years.

May 14: Georgia's parliament adopted a controversial "foreign influence," law which was widely denounced as mirroring repressive Russian legislation used to silence dissent.

May 15: India granted citizenship to a first batch of 14 people under the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

May 15: Nobel Prize-winning Canadian writer Alice Munro

died at the age of 92.

May 15: The newly-built Nassau County International Cricket Stadium, near New York, the world's newest, was launched.

May 15: Lawrence Wong was sworn in as the new Prime Minister of Singapore, replacing Lee Hsien Loong following two decades in office. Wong, formerly deputy prime minister, became only the second person outside of the Lee family to helm the affluent nation.

May 15: Slovakia's Prime Minister Robert Fico was shot multiple times in a failed assassination attempt.

Bull Run Dominates Pakistan Stock Exchange

KSE-100 Index Reaches Historic High

Breaches **76,000 Points** ↑ for the First Time



GK Tidbits

Rwanda to address undocumented migration issues in: **April 2022**

70. The capital city of Rwanda is: **Kigali**

71. The hottest planet in our solar system is: **Venus**

72. The planets that rotate on their axes in a clockwise direction, also known as retrograde rotation, are: **Venus and Uranus**

73. The two planets that do not have any moons are Venus and: **Mercury**

74. Tbilisi is the capital and largest city of: **Georgia**

75. Israel was admitted to the United Nations on: **May 11, 1949**

76. Thalassemia is a genetic disorder of: **Blood**

77. The world's top producer of solar power is: **China**

78. Siberia is a vast and geographically diverse region located in: **Russia**

79. The Euxine Sea is commonly known as: **The Black Sea**

80. The Pyrenees mountain range in the southwestern Europe forms a natural boundary between France and: **Spain**

81. Brahmo Samaj was founded by:

Raja Ram Mohan Roy

82. The 55-member African Union was founded on 26 May 2001 in: **Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

83. Chabahar Port is located in southeastern Iran, on the Gulf of: **Oman**

84. The distance between Iran's Chahbahar Port and Pakistan's Gwadar port is about: **170 kilometres**

85. The Kawasaki disease causes the inflammation of: **Blood vessels**

86. The Cook Islands operates under self-governance but is in free association with: **New Zealand**

87. The Darién Gap, an impenetrable forest, serves as a natural barrier between Panama and: **Colombia**

88. The United Nations Forum on Forests was founded on: **18 October 2000**

89. The first modern Olympics were held in Athens, Greece, in: **1896**

90. Established in 1946, the Cannes Film Festival is a prestigious annual event held in: **France**

91. Primary nutrients for plants are Nitrogen, Phosphorus and: **Potassium**

92. The radio frequencies that

wireless signals use to travel, allowing users to make calls and use social media are called: **Spectrum**

93. Avian Influenza is commonly known as: **Bird flu**

94. When one celestial body passes in front of another, obscuring it from view, the phenomenon is called: **Occultation**

95. The study and mapping of the underwater topography of water bodies is called: **Bathymetry**

96. Carbon stored in coastal and marine ecosystems is referred to as: **Blue carbon**

97. The 11-year solar cycle is known as: **Solar maximum**

98. The world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment is: **United Nations Environment Assembly**

99. The United Nations Environment Assembly was created in: **June 2012**

100. The woman who is celebrated for founding the world's oldest existing, continually operating degree-granting university, the University of Al Quaraouiyine, is: **Fatima al-Fihri**

MCQs / NATIONAL

1. On Apr. 16, _____ became the first player under 12 in Pakistan to attain the esteemed title of FIDE Arena Candidate Master.

(a) Ashaz Merchant (b) Amer Karim
(c) Sibt Ali (d) Kazim Ali

2. On Apr. 17, _____ – Pakistan launched the Pakistan Climate Financing Activity.

(a) UNICEF (b) USAID
(c) Unesco (d) UNDP

3. On Apr. 17, the _____ government launched informal education initiative to reach out-of-school children.

(a) Sindh (b) Punjab
(c) KP (d) AJK

4. President Asif Ali Zardari delivered his first address to the joint session of parliament on _____.

(a) Apr. 18 (b) Apr. 19
(c) Apr. 20 (d) Apr. 22

5. PMLN's current parliamentary leader in the Senate is _____.

(a) Irfan Siddiqui (b) Ishaq Dar
(c) Irfan Qadir (d) Mohsin Naqvi

6. On Apr. 18, Mushahid Hussain Sayed launched Pakistan's first think tank on _____.

(a) AI (b) OBOR
(c) Africa (d) Central Asia

7. The current Chairman of Employees Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) is _____.

(a) Khagan Murtaza
(b) Hashim Khan
(c) Ahmad Ali Randhawa
(d) Shazia Memon

8. On Apr. 19, President Zardari conferred Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) on Chief of _____ General Staff, General Metin Gurak.

(a) Turkish (b) Greek
(c) Colombian (d) Syrian

9. A 14-member provincial cabinet of Balochistan took oath on _____.

(a) Apr. 17 (b) Apr. 18
(c) Apr. 19 (d) Apr. 20

10. On Apr. 19, Pakistan and _____ launched a vocational training program aimed at boosting the skills of young Pakistanis.

(a) Saudi Arabia (b) Finland
(c) UK (d) Turkiye

11. On Apr. 20, Justice Hashim Khan Kakar took oath as the _____ High Court chief justice.

(a) Balochistan (b) Sindh

(c) GB (d) Peshawar
12. On Apr. 20, Justice Iftiaq Ibrahim took oath as chief justice of the _____ High Court.
(a) Peshawar (b) Sindh
(c) Lahore (d) Balochistan

13. On Apr. 21, Pakistan named the Eleventh Avenue in Islamabad the _____ Avenue.

(a) Iran (b) Ankara
(c) China (d) Berlin

14. Former bureaucrat Roedad Khan passed away on _____.
(d) Apr. 18 (b) Apr. 19
(c) Apr. 20 (d) Apr. 21

15. On Apr. 22, Prof Dr Shazia Bashir became only the _____ woman VC in the 160-year history of the GCU, Lahore.
(a) First (b) Second



(c) Third (d) Fifth

16. On Apr. 22, CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz inaugurated Pakistan's first virtual women police station, "Meri Awaz...Maryam Nawaz" in _____.

(a) Lahore (b) Rawalpindi
(c) Multan (d) Gujranwala

17. On Apr. 23, the UNDP ranked Pakistan _____ out of 52 countries on the World Internet Development Index.

(a) 39th (b) 45th
(c) 47th (d) 49th

18. On Apr. 23, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and _____ signed a partnership agreement to boost economic cooperation in the region.

(a) Iran (b) Uzbekistan
(c) China (d) UAE

19. On Apr. 24, _____ was appointed

as convener of the Digital Pakistan committee.

(a) Fahad Husain (b) Tania Aidrus
(c) Tariq Malik (d) Shaza Khawaja

20. On Apr. 25, Pakistan became the _____ largest recipient of loans and grants from the Asian Development Bank.

(a) Third (b) Fifth
(c) Seventh (d) Ninth

21. On Apr. 25, _____ and Pakistan renewed the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA).

(a) Turkiye (b) France
(c) USA (d) UK

22. The Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) was signed in _____.

(a) 1999 (b) 2002
(c) 2003 (d) 2007

23. Pakistan's first hand-drawn animated movie is _____.

(a) Tinku & Tina (b) The Glassworker
(c) Waadey (d) Terminal 3

24. On _____, PM Shehbaz Sharif appointed Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar the Deputy Prime Minister.

(a) Apr. 26 (b) Apr. 28
(c) Apr. 30 (d) May 01

25. On Apr. 30, _____ was appointed as Adviser to Prime Minister on Political & Public Affairs.

(a) Rana Sanaullah (b) Raza Rabbani
(c) Rana Mashhood (d) Saad Rafique

26. On Apr. 30, Uber Technologies Inc. shut down its Pakistan operations, but announced to continue operation on the _____ platform.

(a) Yango (b) Swvl
(c) Careem (d) Carpool

27. On May 02, the joint bilateral exercise of the Pakistan and _____ navies – 'Inspired Union 2024' – was held in Karachi.

(a) US (b) Turkish
(c) Chinese (d) Russian

28. On _____, the federal government established a new agency, the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA).

(a) Apr. 30 (b) May 01
(c) May 02 (d) May 03

29. Pakistan's first satellite mission to the moon, iCube Qamar, was launched on _____.

(a) May 03 (b) May 04
(c) May 07 (d) May 08

30. On May 03, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution,

sponsored by Pakistan and 8 other countries, to proclaim May 24 as the International Day of the _____.
 (a) Snow Leopard (b) **Markhor**
 (c) K2 (d) Ibex

31. Sardar Saleem Haider Khan is the incumbent governor of _____.
 (a) KP (b) Sindh
 (c) **Punjab** (d) GB

32. The world's fifth highest peak, Makalu, at 8,485 metres, is located in _____.
 (a) China (b) India
 (c) **Pakistan** (d) **Nepal**

33. The first Pakistani woman to summit 11 peaks of over 8,000 metres is _____.
 (a) Naila Bhatti (b) Fatima Balti
 (c) Samina Baig (d) **Naila Kiani**

34. On _____. Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhel was sworn in as the new governor of Balochistan.
 (a) May 04 (b) May 05
 (c) **May 06** (d) May 07

35. On May 08, President Zardari approved the appointment of _____ as Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme.

(a) **Rubina Khalid** (b) Sassi Palejo
 (c) Asifa Bhutto (d) Shazia Marri

36. PM Shehbaz Sharif declared an education emergency in the country on _____.
 (a) May 06 (b) May 07
 (c) **May 08** (d) May 09

37. On May 14, a global collaborative investigative journalism project, the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), revealed the ownership of properties of the global elite in _____. leaks.
 (a) Beijing (b) Offshore
 (c) Property (d) **Dubai**

38. On May 15, the Pakistan Army conducted successful training launch



(aghazetaleem.com) of _____ Guided Rocket System with a range of 400 km.
 (a) Shaheen-II (b) Ghauri-II
 (c) Ababeel-II (d) **Fatah-II**

39. The National animal of Pakistan is _____.
 (a) Lion (b) Tiger
 (c) Cat (d) **Markhor**

40. The Durand Line Agreement was signed in November _____.
 (a) 1890 (b) **1893**
 (c) 1894 (d) 1896

INTERNATIONAL

1. On _____, the torch for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games was lit in ancient Olympia.
 (a) **Apr. 16** (b) Apr. 17
 (c) Apr. 18 (d) Apr. 20

2. On Apr. 17, former Pakistan player Mushtaq Ahmed joined _____ as their spin-bowling coach.
 (a) West Indies (b) **Bangladesh**
 (c) England (d) UAE

3. On Apr. 18, the world's largest general election got underway in _____.
 (a) USA (b) **Turkiye**
 (c) India (d) France

4. On Apr. 18, _____ won the prestigious 2024 World Press Photo of the Year award.

(a) Mohamed Mahdy (b) Mads Nissen
 (c) Evgeniy Maloletka
 (d) **Mohammed Salem**

5. On Apr. 19, _____ agreed to return several villages to Azerbaijan.

(a) Russia (b) Iran
 (c) Georgia (d) **Armenia**

6. On Apr. 19, _____ announced the creation of a new military cyber corps 'The Information Support Force'.

(a) UK (b) Japan
 (c) **China** (d) France

7. On Apr. 20, the US House of Representatives passed a \$95 billion legislative package providing security assistance to Ukraine, Israel and _____.
 (a) **Taiwan** (b) Hong Kong
 (c) Japan (d) South Korea

8. On Apr. 22, Turkiye and _____ agreed to cooperate against Kurdish militants, boost economic ties via a new trade corridor and consider the latter's needs for water.
 (a) Jordan (b) **Iraq**
 (c) Greece (d) Syria

9. The State of the Climate in Asia 2023

report has been launched by _____
 (a) WMO (b) ADB
 (c) UNEP (d) UNDP

10. On Apr. 30, the ICJ judges ruled against issuing emergency orders to stop _____ arms exports to Israel.
 (a) French (b) **German**
 (c) British (d) US

11. On May 01, _____ announced to break diplomatic relations with Israel over its actions in Gaza.
 (a) Ecuador (b) South Africa
 (c) **Colombia** (d) Turkiye

12. On May 02, _____ stopped all exports and imports to and from Israel.
 (a) Colombia (b) China
 (c) Austria (d) **Turkiye**

13. On May 02, China-friendly Jeremiah Manele was elected as the prime minister of _____.
 (a) Solomon Islands (b) Vanuatu
 (c) Cambodia (d) Vietnam

14. On May 04, Sadiq Khan made history by becoming the first ever person in British history to clinch terms as London Mayor.

(a) Two (b) **Three**
 (c) Four (d) None of these

15. On May 05, the 15th Summit of the OIC Member States was held in Banjul, the capital of _____.
 (a) Chad (b) **Gambia**
 (c) Somalia (d) Morocco

16. On May 07, Scottish parliament approved John Swinney as the country's First Minister, succeeding _____.
 (a) **Humza Yousaf** (b) Nicola Sturgeon
 (c) Henry McLeish (d) Alex Salmond

17. On May 08, EU member states agreed to use billions of euros in profits from frozen _____ central bank assets to arm Ukraine and fund its post-war reconstruction.
 (a) Iranian (b) Afghan
 (c) **Russian** (d) Polish

18. On May 10, Russia appointed Mikhail Mishustin as the country's _____.
 (a) Foreign Minister (b) **Prime Minister**
 (c) Finance Minister (d) Defence Minister

19. On May 11, _____ defeated Pakistan in penalty shoot-out to clinch the 30th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup in Ipoh, Malaysia.
 (a) India (b) **Japan**
 (c) South Korea (d) Malaysia

20. On May 12, Rick Slayman, the man who became the first human to

receive a new kidney from a genetically modified _____. died.
 (a) Monkey (b) Dog
 (c) Chimpanzee (d) Pig

21. On May 12, ____ won the famed Eurovision Song Contest.
 (a) Belgium (b) Italy
 (c) Norway (d) Switzerland

22. On ____ India and Iran signed a 10-year contract to develop and equip the strategic Chabahar port in Iran.
 (a) May 11 (b) May 12
 (c) May 13 (d) May 14

23. OpenAI released GPT-4, a higher performing and more efficient version of the artificial intelligence technology, on _____.
 (a) May 11 (b) May 12
 (c) May 13 (d) May 14

24. On May 14, ____ parliament adopted a controversial "foreign influence" law.
 (a) Georgia's (b) Poland's
 (c) Ecuador's (d) Italy's

25. On May 15, India granted citizenship to a first batch of ____ people under the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).
 (a) 14 (b) 18
 (c) 26 (d) 30

26. On May 15, Nobel Prize-winning writer Alice Munro died.
 (a) Danish (b) Canadian
 (c) Swiss (d) French

27. On May 15, the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium, the world's newest, was launched in _____.
 (a) Kenya (b) USA
 (c) England (d) Australia

28. On May 15, Lawrence Wong was sworn in as the new Prime Minister of _____.
 (a) Cambodia (b) Thailand
 (c) Singapore (d) Hong Kong

29. On May 15, ____ Prime Minister Robert Fico was shot multiple times in a failed assassination attempt.
 (a) Serbia's (b) Latvia's
 (c) Slovakia's (d) Finland's

30. The term 'Globalization' was coined by _____.
 (a) Karl Marx (b) J. M. Keynes
 (c) Theodore Levitt (d) Henry J. Aaron

31. Adolf Hitler was born in _____.
 (a) Austria (b) Germany
 (c) Italy (d) Hungary

32. The document that outlines the fundamental rights and freedoms of the citizens in the United States is _____.
 (a) Liber Ignium (b) Bill of Rights
 (c) Federal Charter (d) Magna Carta

33. 'A Grammar of Politics' was written by _____.
 (a) Harold Laski (b) Karl Marx
 (c) Joseph Stalin (d) Leo Tolstoy

34. The Storting is the parliament of

(a) Australia (b) Norway
 (c) Denmark (d) New Zealand
 35. The number of official languages of the United Nations is _____.
 (a) Four (b) Five
 (c) Six (d) Seven

36. A distinct geographical region with specific climate, vegetation, and animal life is called a _____.
 (a) National Park (b) Sanctuary
 (c) Biome (d) Bema

37. After 27 years of imprisonment, Nelson Mandela was released in _____.
 (a) Jan. 1987 (b) Feb. 1988
 (c) Jan. 1989 (d) Feb. 1990

38. South Africa followed the system of Apartheid from 1948 to _____.
 (a) 1990 (b) 1992
 (c) 1994 (d) 1998

39. The Saltire, also known as St. Andrew's cross, is the national flag of _____.
 (a) Russia (b) Scotland
 (c) Denmark (d) USA

40. According to SIPRI, ____ was the world's leading arms importer from 2019 to 2023.
 (a) Israel (b) Saudi Arabia
 (c) Qatar (d) India

LEADERS KILLED IN AVIATION-RELATED ACCIDENTS

Dec 9, 1936 
Arvid Lindman
 Prime Minister of Sweden

April 27, 1969 
Rene Barrientos
 President of Bolivia

Sept 7, 1940 
Jose Felix Estigarribia
 President of Paraguay

March 29, 1959 
Barthelemy Boganda
 President of the Central African Republic

April 13, 1966 
Abdul Salam Arif
 President of Iraq



May 24, 1981 
Jaime Roldos Aguilera
 President of Ecuador

July 31, 1981 
Omer Torrijos
 President of Panama

Oct 19, 1986 
Samora Machel
 President of Mozambique

June 1, 1987 
Rashid Karami
 Prime Minister of Lebanon

Dec 4, 1980 
Francisco Sa Carneiro
 Prime Minister of Portugal

Aug 17, 1988 
Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq
 President of Pakistan

April 6, 1994 
Cyprien Ntaryamira
 President of Burundi

Feb 26, 2004 
Boris Trajkovski
 President of North Macedonia

April 10, 2010 
Lech Kaczynski
 President of Poland

Feb 5, 2024 
Sebastian Pinera
 Former President of Chile

May 19, 2024 
Ebrahim Raisi
 President of Iran